

Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru



33

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Nehru**



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Volume Three

A Project of the
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Memorial Fund



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FOREWORD

Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the key figures of the twentieth century. He symbolised some of the major forces which have transformed our age.

When Jawaharlal Nehru was young, history was still the privilege of the West; the rest of the world lay in deliberate darkness. The impression given was that the vast continents of Asia and Africa existed merely to sustain their masters in Europe and North America. Jawaharlal Nehru's own education in Britain could be interpreted, in a sense, as an attempt to secure for him a place within the pale. His letters of the time are evidence of his sensitivity, his interest in science and international affairs as well as of his pride in India and Asia. But his personality was veiled by his shyness and a facade of nonchalance, and perhaps, outwardly there was not much to distinguish him from the ordinary run of men. Gradually there emerged the warm and universal being who became intensely involved with the problems of the poor and the oppressed in all lands. In doing so, Jawaharlal Nehru gave articulation and leadership to millions of people in his own country and in Asia and Africa.

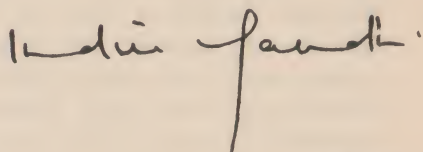
That imperialism was a curse which should be lifted from the brows of men, that poverty was incompatible with civilisation, that nationalism should be poised on a sense of international community and that it was not sufficient to brood on these things when action was urgent and compelling — these were the principles which inspired and gave vitality to Jawaharlal Nehru's activities in the years of India's struggle for freedom and made him not only an intense nationalist but one of the leaders of humanism.

No particular ideological doctrine could claim Jawaharlal Nehru for its own. Long days in jail were spent in reading widely. He drew much from the thought of East and West and from the philosophies of the past and the present. Never religious in the formal sense, yet he had a deep love for the culture and tradition of his own land. Never a rigid Marxist, yet he was deeply influenced by that theory and was particularly impressed by what he saw in the Soviet Union on his first visit in 1927. However, he realised that the world was too complex, and man had too many facets, to be encompassed by any single or total explanation. He himself was a socialist with an abhorrence of regimentation and a democrat who was anxious to reconcile his faith in civil liberty with the necessity of mitigating economic and social wretchedness. His struggles, both within himself and with the outside world, to adjust such seeming

contradictions are what make his life and work significant and fascinating.

As a leader of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru recognised that his country could neither stay out of the world nor divest itself of its own interests in world affairs. But to the extent that it was possible, Jawaharlal Nehru sought to speak objectively and to be a voice of sanity in the shrill phases of the 'cold war'. Whether his influence helped on certain occasions to maintain peace is for the future historian to assess. What we do know is that for a long stretch of time he commanded an international audience reaching far beyond governments, that he spoke for ordinary, sensitive, thinking men and women around the globe and that his was a constituency which extended far beyond India.

So the story of Jawaharlal Nehru is that of a man who evolved, who grew in storm and stress till he became the representative of much that was noble in his time. It is the story of a generous and gracious human being who summed up in himself the resurgence of the "third world" as well as the humanism which transcends dogmas and is adapted to the contemporary context. His achievement, by its very nature and setting, was much greater than that of a Prime Minister. And it is with the conviction that the life of this man is of importance not only to scholars but to all, in India and elsewhere, who are interested in the valour and compassion of the human spirit that the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund has decided to publish a series of volumes consisting of all that is significant in what Jawaharlal Nehru spoke and wrote. There is, as is to be expected in the speeches and writings of a man so engrossed in affairs and gifted with expression, much that is ephemeral; this will be omitted. The official letters and memoranda will also not find place here. But it is planned to include everything else and the whole corpus should help to remind us of the quality and endeavour of one who was not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind, but a completely integrated human being.



New Delhi
18 January 1972

Chairman
Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund

EDITORIAL NOTE

The third volume of the *Selected Works* takes up the story in December 1927, when Jawaharlal Nehru returned to India after a stay of nearly two years in Europe. The impact of this visit can be seen in the new tone of radicalism and the clear understanding of international affairs which inspired his activities. At the Madras session of the Congress he secured the passage of a resolution preferring full Independence to Dominion Status; and in the following months he organized the Independence for India League to prevent any back-sliding. At a broader level he sought to mobilise the youth of India and prepare them for the struggles that lay ahead, not only for political but also for economic and social freedom. Swaraj and socialism were joint objectives and Jawaharlal Nehru repeatedly stressed that India could not have the one without the other. He also emphasised the influence of world forces on Indian events, warned his countrymen of the dangers of war and all that it implied, and promoted in India the work of the League against Imperialism. The national ideal was a cooperative socialist commonwealth, and the international ideal a world federation of socialist states.

As the documents in this volume reveal, these multifold activities of Jawaharlal Nehru caused concern not only to the Government of India but also, occasionally, to Mahatma Gandhi and many of Jawaharlal Nehru's colleagues in the Congress. But, with astonishing energy and effort, Jawaharlal Nehru pressed ahead on many fronts. At the Calcutta session of the Congress in December 1928, it was primarily because of him that, while the Congress accepted the Nehru report, it decided to launch another campaign of noncooperation if this report were not accepted by the government within a year. Meantime the government launched its own offensive in the form of *lathi* charges, widespread arrests and repressive legislation. The result was that by the summer of 1929 events were heading, as Jawaharlal Nehru foresaw and relished, towards a direct confrontation between the government and the Congress.

The *Letters from a Father to his Daughter*, written by Jawaharlal Nehru from Mussoorie in the summer of 1928, have not been included in this volume as they are easily available in book form.

Much of the material included in this volume has been selected from the papers of Jawaharlal Nehru.

Acknowledgment is due to the U.P. Government and State Archives, the Maharashtra Government, the National Archives of India and the Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya for permitting us to utilise material in their possession. *The Leader, The Hindu, The Bombay Chronicle, The Tribune, The Searchlight, The Amrita Bazar Patrika, The Hindustan Times* and the *Abhyudaya* have been good enough to allow us to reprint letters and texts of speeches and statements first published by them.

The cooperation extended by the Director and staff of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library is acknowledged.

CONTENTS

1. The Madras Congress and After

THE DEMAND FOR INDEPENDENCE

1	Statement to the Press	19 December	1927	1
2	To Mother	23 December	1927	2
3	Statement to the Press	22 December	1927	2
4	On the Resolution on Independence	25 December	1927	3
5	The Resolution on Independence	27 December	1927	5
6	Presidential Address at the First Session of the Republican Congress	28 December	1927	7
7	Speech at Allahabad	7 January	1928	8
8	To Mahatma Gandhi	11 January	1928	10
9	Statement to the Press	12 January	1928	16
10	On Mahatma Gandhi's Leadership	21 January	1928	17
11	To Mahatma Gandhi	23 January	1928	18
12	Statement on the Independence Resolution	27 January	1928	20
13	To B. Sambamurti	14 March	1928	23
14	To Swami Govindananda	19 March	1928	24

THE DANGER OF WAR

15	On the Danger of War	December	1927	25
16	To Chaudhri Raghubir Narain Singh	15 March	1928	30
17	To Secretaries, P.C.Cs Delhi and Punjab	15 March	1928	31
18	To Secretary, P.C.C., U.P.	March	1928	31
19	To Chaudhri Raghubir Narain Singh	31 March	1928	32
20	To Chaudhri Raghubir Narain Singh	11 June	1928	32

2. The Nehru Report

1	Circular to Political Organisations	18 January	1928	35
2	To Mahatma Gandhi	23 February	1928	36
3	Statement at All Parties Conference	8 March	1928	36
4	To Syed Mahmud	17 March	1928	37
5	To the Members of the Congress Working Committee	3 May	1928	38
6	To J. N. Gupta	9 May	1928	39
7	Interview to the Press	22 May	1928	40
8	The Ideal of Indian Freedom	24 May	1928	42
9	To S. S. Mirajkar	11 June	1928	43
10	To M. M. Banaji	11 June	1928	43
11	To Hosakoppa Krishna Rao	11 June	1928	44
12	To Saifuddin Kitchlew, Deva Ratan Sharma and Mangal Singh	11 June	1928	45
13	To Subhas Chandra Bose	27 June	1928	46
14	To K. T. Mathew	27 June	1928	47
15	Invitation to the Meeting of the All Parties Committee	28 June	1928	48
16	To Mahatma Gandhi	30 June	1928	49
17	To Syed Mahmud	30 June	1928	50
18	Resolution on Reservation of Seats	7 July	1928	52
19	To Choithram P. Gidwani	6 August	1928	52
20	To Swami Krishnanand	6 August	1928	54
21	To the Secretary, All India Aryan League	21 August	1928	54
22	To Khaliqzaman	21 August	1928	56
23	Speech at the All Parties Conference	29 August	1928	57
24	On the Results of the All Parties Conference	4 September	1928	61
25	To C. Vijayaraghavachariar	21 September	1928	62
26	To Muhammad Shafi	13 October	1928	62
27	On the Nehru Report and the Indian States	14 October	1928	63
28	To Balaki Ram	16 January	1929	64

3. The Independence for India League

1	Provisional Rules of the League	31 August	1928	67
2	To N. V. Gadgil	18 September	1928	68
3	To V. Chattopadhyaya	27 September	1928	69
4	To Kshitish Chandra Dutta	4 October	1928	71
5	To N. S. Hardikar	8 October	1928	71
6	Statement to the Press	2 November	1928	73
7	Circular on the Activities of the League	8 November	1928	74
8	Interview to the Press	16 November	1928	76

4. Boycott of the Simon Commission

1	Organization of the Boycott	7 January	1928	81
2	Speech at Allahabad	10 January	1928	83
3	To S. Srinivasa Iyengar	17 January	1928	84
4	To the Editor, Swarajya	18 January	1928	86
5	Message to the Citizens of Allahabad	19 January	1928	86
6	Statement to the Press	24 January	1928	87
7	To Kamta Prasad Kakkar	25 January	1928	88
8	On the Observance of the Hartal	29 January	1928	88
9	To the Secretary, P.C.C. Maharashtra	2 February	1928	89
10	On the Success of the Hartal in Allahabad	3 February	1928	90
11	Speech at Allahabad	3 February	1928	92
12	To Syed Mahmud	4 February	1928	93
13	Interview to the Press	7 February	1928	94
14	On the Hartal in Allahabad	27 February	1928	95
15	Interview to the Press	4 April	1928	97
16	To Atul Krishna Ghose	9 June	1928	98
17	To Fenner Brockway	11 June	1928	100
18	Interview to the Press	2 November	1928	100

19	To the Editor, Sarhad	10 November	1928	101
20	To Mohanlal Saxena	14 November	1928	102
21	Tribute to Lala Lajpat Rai	21 November	1928	103
22	They Have Dared !	November	1928	104
23	To Mohanlal Saxena	1 December	1928	105
24	Statement to the Press	30 November	1928	106
25	Telegrams to R. Bridgeman and G. S. Dara	3 December	1928	108
26	Statement to the Press	1 December	1928	108
27	Statement on the Lathi- charge at Lucknow	1 December	1928	115
28	To Dharendra Mozumdar	5 December	1928	116
29	To V. Chattopadhyaya	5 December	1928	117
30	Statement to the Press	4 December	1928	119
31	To R. Bridgeman	5 December	1928	119
32	To Subhas Chandra Bose	6 December	1928	120
33	To Mahatma Gandhi	13 December	1928	121
34	Evidence in Desh Bhagat Case	9 August	1929	121

5. League Against Imperialism

1	To Roger Baldwin	13 March	1928	125
2	To Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi	15 March	1928	126
3	To Subhas Chandra Bose	15 March	1928	126
4	Circular to Provincial Congress Committees	27 March	1928	127
5	To H. S. Liao	18 April	1928	128
6	To Edo Fimmen	7 May	1928	129
7	To Roger Baldwin	14 May	1928	130
8	To James Maxton	14 May	1928	131
9	To R. Bridgeman	11 June	1928	132
10	To V. Chattopadhyaya	26 June	1928	132
11	To R. Bridgeman	26 June	1928	133
12	To V. Chattopadhyaya	July	1928	134
13	To Mangal Singh	10 July	1928	136

14	To Roger Baldwin	19 July	1928	137
15	The Changing Face of Imperialism	21 July	1928	139
16	To V. Chattopadhyaya	3 October	1928	142
17	To the Secretary, League against Imperialism	9 October	1928	145
18	To V. Chattopadhyaya	9 October	1928	145
19	Circular on the Second World Congress of the League	20 October	1928	146
20	To V. Chattopadhyaya	25 October	1928	147
21	To R. Bridgeman	25 October	1928	149
22	To V. Chattopadhyaya	31 October	1928	150
23	To V. Chattopadhyaya	7 November	1928	151
24	The Imperialist Danger			152

6. General Secretary, A.I.C.C.

1	Presidential Address at the Fifth Session of the Hindustani Seva Dal	December	1927	159
2	To Subhas Chandra Bose	15 March	1928	161
3	To N. S. Hardikar	28 March	1928	162
4	On the Boycott of Foreign Cloth	13 April	1928	163
5	To A. Rangaswami Iyengar	18 April	1928	164
6	To Secretaries of Provincial Congress Committees	8 June	1928	165
7	To the Congressmen of Kerala	10 June	1928	166
8	To M. Annapurniah	11 June	1928	167
9	To the Editor, Mysore Patriot	26 June	1928	168
10	To Vahid Yar Khan	4 July	1928	169
11	On the Inauguration of the Physical Culture Academy, Bagalkot	July-August	1928	169
12	To N. S. Hardikar	24 August	1928	170
13	On the Dal	August	1928	170

3	On the Establishment of Congress Agencies Abroad	31 December	1928	275
4	On Subhas Bose's Amendment of Mahatma Gandhi's Resolution	December	1928	276
5	On the Calcutta Congress	10 January	1929	277

10. The Independence for India League 1929

1	To Members of the All India Council of the League	31 January	1929	281
2	To A. A. Shaikh	13 February	1929	283
3	To N. V. Gangadhar	14 February	1929	283
4	To K. L. Ganguly	5 March	1929	284
5	To B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya	19 March	1929	285
6	To Members of the Central Council and Provincial Organisers and Secretaries of the League	10 April	1929	286
7	To S. Srinivasa Iyengar	8 May	1929	289
8	To Members of the Central and Provincial Councils of the League	15 November	1929	290
9	To Members of the Central Council of the League	7 December	1929	291

11. League against Imperialism 1929

1	To V. Chattopadhyaya	January	1929	295
2	To James Maxton	16 January	1929	296
3	To V. Chattopadhyaya	23 January	1929	296
4	To B. G. Lokhare	28 January	1929	297

5	To R. Bridgeman	31 January	1929	298
6	To R. Bridgeman	13 March	1929	299
7	To V. Chattopadhyaya	4 April	1929	299
8	To V. Chattopadhyaya	25 April	1929	300
9	To V. Chattopadhyaya	7 May	1929	301
10	To V. Chattopadhyaya	22 May	1929	302
11	The Coming Crisis in India	22 May	1929	302
12	To Taraknath Das	21 June	1929	307
13	To Secretary, League against Imperialism	26 June	1929	307
14	To Shiva Prasad Gupta	27 June	1929	308
15	To Roger Baldwin	27 June	1929	310
16	To V. Chattopadhyaya	1 August	1929	310
17	To Taraknath Das	25 August	1929	311
18	To Edo Fimmen	25 November	1929	312
19	To V. Chattopadhyaya	25 November	1929	312
20	To Roger Baldwin	25 November	1929	313

12. Public Safety Bill

1	Statement to the Press	4 February	1929	317
2	On the Public Safety Bill	7 February	1929	318
3	Speech at Delhi	7 March	1929	319
4	Statement to the Press	22 March	1929	320
5	On the Public Safety Bill	13 April	1929	321
6	Comments on the Public Safety Bill	5 July	1929	324

13. The Meerut Conspiracy Case

1	To M. K. Basu	22 March	1929	331
2	To R. Bridgeman	4 April	1929	332

3	To S. Srinivasa Iyengar	4 April	1929	332
4	To B. N. Dutta	4 April	1929	333
5	To Father	24 April	1929	334
6	To R. Bridgeman	25 April	1929	335
7	To Father	1 May	1929	337
8	Cable to R. Bridgeman	7 May	1929	341
9	To R. Bridgeman	7 May	1929	341
10	To R. Bridgeman	20 May	1929	342
11	Statement on Meerut Prisoners	22 May	1929	343
12	To R. Bridgeman	10 June	1929	344
13	To V. Chattopadhyaya	20 June	1929	344
14	To R. Bridgeman	22 June	1929	348
15	To Walter Citrine	22 June	1929	349
16	To R. Bridgeman	1 July	1929	353
17	To R. Bridgeman	11 July	1929	354
18	To R. Bridgeman	11 July	1929	355
19	To S. Srinivasa Iyengar	20 August	1929	356
20	To S. Srinivasa Iyengar	27 August	1929	357
21	To A.C.N. Nambiar	23 September	1929	358

14. Articles and Addresses

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC

1	Speech at Mahila Vidyapith, Allahabad	31 March	1928	361
2	The Poverty of India and Its Cure	April	1928	363
3	On Kisan Agitation at Katahara	4 July	1928	368
4	Swaraj and Socialism	11 August	1928	369
5	The Kisan and Swaraj	September	1928	372
6	The Misfortunes of the Kisans	December	1928	374
7	Unemployment in India	April	1929	377

GENERAL

8	India and the Need for International Contacts	13 May	1928	379
---	--	--------	------	-----

9	Reply to address of the Calicut Municipal Council	30 May	1928	386
10	For a King's Favour	27 June	1928	387
11	On Ministers and the Like	10 July	1928	390
12	The Proscription and Censorship of Books	6 March	1929	393
13	Slaves of the Gods	25 April	1929	395

15. Miscellaneous Correspondence

1	On Police Atrocities in Banaras	21 January	1928	403
2	To F. J. Ginwala	14 March	1928	404
3	To Kanhaiyalal Shastri	31 March	1928	404
4	To Mahatma Gandhi	14 April	1928	405
5	On the Death of Anandi Prasad Sinha	20 April	1928	406
6	To Ratanlal Bhatia	4 May	1928	408
7	To Vijayalakshmi Pandit	24 May	1928	409
8	To Vijayalakshmi Pandit	31 May	1928	410
9	To Alokanda Mahabharati	10 July	1928	412
10	To W. P. Ignatius	10 July	1928	412
11	To Vijayalakshmi Pandit	19 July	1928	413
12	To Subhas Chandra Bose	11 August	1928	414
13	To Biswanath Mukerji	27 September	1928	415
14	On Violence at Tamkohi	29 October	1928	415
15	To Syed Mahmud	15 November	1928	419
16	To Sri Krishna Sinha	16 January	1929	420
17	To S. S. Rao	16 January	1929	420
18	To B. P. Singh	19 January	1929	421
19	To R. S. Sharma	19 January	1929	421
20	To Mahatma Gandhi	21 January	1929	422
21	To T. Bragança-Cunha	22 January	1929	424
22	To T. Bragança-Cunha	12 February	1929	424
23	To the Times Book Club London	14 February	1929	425
24	To Duncan Greenlees	22 February	1929	427
25	To William B. Feakins	26 February	1929	427

26	To Shambhu Nath	5 March	1929	428
27	To Thakurdas Pahwa	13 March	1929	428
28	To S.A.S. Tyabji	22 March	1929	429
29	To Father	29 March	1929	430
30	To N. K. Bannerji	5 April	1929	431
31	To Mathura Prasad	8 April	1929	432

ILLUSTRATIONS

With Mahatma Gandhi, 1929.	<i>Frontispiece</i>
With Congress workers in Madras, 1927.	
With Congress workers at Allahabad, 1928.	<i>between pp.</i> 32—33
Family group	
With Dr. M. A. Ansari.	
Meerut, October 1928.	112—113
President, Bombay Presidency Youth Conference, Poona, 1928.	
President of the U. P. Political Conference, Jhansi, 1928.	208—209
With Sarojini Naidu and others.	
Lucknow, 1929.	
Photostat of first page of letter to Mahatma Gandhi, 23 January 1928	304—305

THE MADRAS CONGRESS AND AFTER



THE DEMAND FOR INDEPENDENCE

I. Statement to the Press¹

I have been away from India for nearly two years. Hence I prefer not to make any definite statements regarding the political situation in India at present.

I am going to Madras to attend the Congress and hope to meet there some of my colleagues and to come in closer touch with the current developments. As far as the Statutory Commission is concerned I am not in the least concerned. I do not think that the inclusion of Indians² would improve it in the least or make it any more acceptable.

I do not believe that the Commission could do anything for India. Indians themselves must work out their own political emancipation. It is a struggle between Indians and the British and, as such, Indians will have to create strength in themselves to achieve their emancipation.

The presumption of the British Parliament in dictating to Indians was an insult to India and we should treat it as such and ignore the Commission.

I have read *Mother India*, which is a very offensive book. It is a gross libel on Indians and an outrageous misrepresentation of Indian women. I am not able to say whether the book had been subsidised by the British Government, but from certain statements made in the book and elsewhere it was clear that Miss Mayo had been assisted by officials of the country. All members of Parliament had been provided with free copies. I wonder who had borne the expenses. The book is not much known in the Continent, but possibly translations will be made.

To my mind the Hindu-Muslim tension was due to the display of too much religiosity on the part of both communities. The communal leaders are more to be blamed for this than the masses. It is indeed a disquieting factor in our progress and the earlier it is got rid of the better. There is too much of what is called religion in our life and

1. Colombo, 19 December 1927. *The Leader*, 22 December 1927.

2. On 8 November 1927 the Conservative Government announced the appointment of a commission, consisting of members of the British Parliament with Sir John Simon as chairman, to report on the working of the Act of 1919. The exclusion of Indians caused much indignation, and there was a general determination to boycott the commission.

politics. The less we talk of and worry about the next world, the more good we are likely to do to our fellow countrymen and country.

2. To Mother¹

Madras
23.12.27

My dear Mother,

We arrived here yesterday. Our immediate problem was that of clothes, for we have no *khadi* clothes. Kamala and Beti are busy stitching since yesterday.

We are all well but have no news of you. In Colombo we heard that you have not been well for some time. I was greatly worried till I got your telegram. But we have still received no letter.

Work pertaining to the Congress session has begun now and for some time there will be more than enough to do.

We hope to see you soon now.

Love.

Your son
Jawahar

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Original in Hindi.

3. Statement to the Press¹

I had been cut off from all Indian news for over two weeks during the period of my voyage to India. But on arrival here, I read the two messages which Major Graham Pole² had brought out.

1. 22 December 1927. *The Leader*, 24 December 1927.

2. Labour M.P. who was interested in Indian problems. In 1927 he brought messages from Ramsay MacDonald and Lansbury to the Indian people, appealing for cooperation with the Simon Commission.

Just before leaving London, I had occasion to watch the proceedings in Parliament in regard to the Indian Statutory Commission and the activities of the Labour Party relating to it. It was my firm conviction then and it is now that the Labour Party has definitely adopted a fully imperialist attitude wholly in consonance with the Tory Government's attitude towards India.

Even the Independent Labour Party has been brought in line with the majority view of the party and, as is well known, the only effective opposition in Parliament was that of the solitary Indian member, Mr. Saklatwala. The left-wingers of the Labour Party, with the partial exception of Col. Wedgwood,³ remained wholly silent and had not one word to say about their much-vaunted principle of self-determination.

Messrs MacDonald and Lansbury are over-fond of giving expression to their sympathy and cordiality with India, but in no single instance has this effusiveness been translated into action, and I am quite certain that a future Labour Government, if it comes into power, will be as objectionable to the Indian people as Lord Birkenhead and company.

For my part, I prefer a frank opponent like Lord Birkenhead to gentlemen who talk tall and do nothing like Messrs MacDonald and Lansbury. They are very fond of giving advice to Indians. May I follow their example in one small particular at any rate and ask them to keep their messages and messengers to themselves? In spite of our problems and difficulties we hope to make good without the help of the Labour Party.

3. Colonel Josiah, later 1st Baron Wedgwood, (1872-1943); Labour M.P. 1906-42; member of the Labour Government 1924; vice-chairman of Labour Party 1921-24.

4. On the Resolution on Independence¹

Jawaharlal Nehru moved :

"This Congress declares the goal of the Indian people to be independence with full control over the defence forces of the country, the financial and economic policy and the relations with foreign countries.

1. Discuss. n at the Subjects Committee of the Congress at Madras on 25 December 1927, reported in *The Hindu*, 26 December 1927.

The Congress demands that this right of the people of India should be forthwith recognised and given effect to, in particular by the complete withdrawal of the alien army of occupation.'

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru regretted that the resolution should have been characterised as silly and as such would make them the laughing stock of the world. Mr. Vijiaraghavachariar,² a veteran in the Congress, brought to bear in his criticism against the resolution all the weight of his learning and experience. He talked of the French Revolution and such other things but the speaker wished that Mr. Vijiaraghavachariar had carried his research a little further into the 19th and 20th centuries. He wished Mr. Achariar had told them something of the more recent developments. He was too full of what had happened in the 17th and 18th centuries. He had been pleased to call the resolution silly and some others present had echoed that cry. The resolution might be defective. It might contain many faults. It might even be considered premature by some but it could not be called silly.

He referred to the remarks of Babu Rajendra Prasad³ that by passing this resolution the Congress would become the laughing stock of the world. He had never heard of a more amazing proposition. Countries such as Morocco, Turkey, Syria and Palestine were claiming independence. Did they become the laughing stock of the world? This attitude on the part of people only showed they had adopted a monastic view of things and he had a very strong objection to that. If they proposed to wait for a favourable opportunity when they could make a declaration of their goal of independence that opportunity would never come. They had to face the situation boldly and clearly and spell out their demands openly. There is no question of possibility or probability. Swaraj within the British Empire was nothing for him. He felt it to be degrading for this country to be within the British Empire. A great country like ours must be a free country and if and when it was free, it could stretch out its hands and make alliances. There was no question of enmity or ill-will towards Britain when they so said it. He would with

2. C. Vijiaraghavachariar (1852-1944); Member, Madras Legislative Council, 1895-1901 and of the Imperial Legislative Council 1913-16; President of the Indian National Congress at its session in Nagpur in December 1920.
3. Dr. Rajendra Prasad (1884-1963); set up legal practice in Patna; joined Mahatma Gandhi in the Champaran Satyagraha 1917; joined the noncooperation movement in 1920; President, Indian National Congress 1934, 1939, and 1947-48; served several terms of imprisonment; in charge of Food and Agriculture portfolio 1946-48; President, Indian Constituent Assembly 1946-50; President of India 1950-62.

humility ask Babu Rajendra Prasad which country, what tribe or what individual outside India would laugh at this resolution. He was sure he could not name it. Rajendra Babu must have got this idea from Anglo-Indian and moderate journals.

But Mrs. Besant's point was as to whether this resolution affected the creed of the Congress. His opinion was it did not affect it. Of course it would be interpreted that the creed of the majority was the creed for the time being and the ruling of Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar and other eminent lawyers was that the creed remained what it was at present. The resolution did not exclude anybody from joining the Congress. He hoped that more people would come in and change it if they wanted it.

Pandit Nehru then dealt briefly with the amendments before the House and said that though he would very much like to preserve the wording of this resolution he would for the sake of unanimity agree to the following form as he found it was acceptable to a large majority of members:

"This Congress declares the goal of the Indian people to be complete National Independence."

5. The Resolution on Independence¹

It is my high privilege to place before you the resolution on Independence.

The resolution reads thus :—

"This Congress declares the goal of the Indian people to be complete National Independence."

I do not think I can describe this resolution in any better language than that used by the distinguished ex-President of the Congress, Dr. Annie Besant, in an interview which she gave immediately after the

1. Report of the Proceedings of the Indian National Congress, Madras 1927.
This resolution was moved by Jawaharlal at the open session of the Congress on 27 December 1927.

Subjects Committee had accepted this resolution. She said that it was a dignified and a clear statement of India's goal.

No special remarks are necessary from me in commending this resolution for your acceptance specially after the almost complete unanimity with which the Subjects Committee approved of it. But I wish to explain very clearly one or two points connected with this resolution. The first thing is that this resolution, although it makes clear the goal, does not change the present creed of the Congress. If you pass this resolution, you declare by a majority, I hope by an overwhelming majority, that the Congress is today for complete independence. Nonetheless you leave the doors of the Congress open to such persons as may not approve of this goal as they perhaps are satisfied with a lesser or a smaller goal. I think that although the door of the Congress is open, there should be no doubt, if you approve of this resolution, then everybody must say that the majority of the Congressmen today demand complete independence for the country. Now this resolution as placed before you is a very short and simple one. In the Subjects Committee the resolution, as you may know, because the proceedings are quite public, was slightly longer and more complicated. But ultimately it was changed to this present formula and this formula was adopted.

I wish to make it clear to you that the adoption of this formula does not in any way change the spirit or the meaning of the resolution. It means what it says. It means complete independence. It means control of the defence forces of the country. It means control over the financial and economic policy of the country. It means control over the relations with foreign countries. Without these things, independence would be a travesty and camouflage.

Thirdly I wish to point out to you, lest there be any mistake, that this goal, which I hope you will adopt today, is the immediate goal and not a goal of the far distant future. Whether we achieve it today or tomorrow, a year hence or 10 years hence, I cannot say. That depends on your strength and the strength of the country.

May I in conclusion express my heart-felt gratitude that the Congress is about to adopt the goal worthy of our country's high destiny and hope that this goal may be reached in the near future.

9. Presidential Address at the First Session of the Republican Congress¹

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru thanked the organisers of the Congress² for electing him as President, and observed that he had been in no way connected with the workers and comrades who organised the *Swadhin Bharat Sangha*³ because he was not present in India at that time. The attraction of a Republican ideal was very great and if it was possible for him to give his services to promote that ideal he felt it his bounden duty to do so. Some people said that now that the National Congress declared its goal to be full national independence, there was no necessity for a Republican Congress. Primarily they should take their stand on the principle that Swaraj was India's birthright. When there was domination and oppression there was bound to be terrible suffering. Even though the Congress passed a resolution of independence, a new organisation should be formed to carry on propaganda and try to convert those who had vague ideas of independence and did not know what Republicanism was. The object of the resolution of independence passed by the Congress was the ultimate withdrawal of the British from India. It ought to be the duty of the new organisation to lay stress on things which were to be done to give effect to the resolution of independence. In the first instance the Republican ideal should be promulgated. The main lesson of this year's Congress was that it had been the most important session because it really changed the direction in which the Congress had been so far moving. In one or two matters it gave a new angle of vision. Since the failure of the noncooperation movement the Congress had been drifting to middle class or Babu politics and was losing the support of the masses. Various forces were at work today which were important and which were likely to shape the future of the country. It was important for them to form some kind of organisation which would keep the National Congress up to the mark and also prepare the country for a Republican ideal. The

1. *The Hindu*, 29 December 1927.

2. The Republican Congress held its first session at Madras on 28 December 1927 in the Congress pandal. Bulusu Sambamurti opened the Congress and Jawaharlal presided over it.

3. The Republican League, the organisation set up to work for the establishment of complete national independence as early as possible. Jawaharlal was president of the executive committee.

world had adopted Republicanism. Some countries had some kind of monarchy but almost everybody realised that Republicanism was the only thing that was necessary for the future. Monarchies, wherever they existed now, were not likely to survive very long. Republicanism had come to stay. It would be for India to determine what kind of Republicanism would be best suited to Indian conditions. Did India wish the government of this country to be based more or less on the exploitation of one by another or did she wish to remove the exploitation and the causes thereof so that there might be equality between the various members of the Republic? That was the problem before them. The Republican propaganda should make it clear on what principle India wished to establish her Republican government. It was right for India to keep apart from international complications. They had had enough of the British connection and India should try not to have any entanglements in the future with any foreign country or organisation. Nonetheless, in order to fashion their policy they should understand what was happening in the rest of the world. The Republican Congress organisation should have simple rules for its work.

7. Speech at Allahabad¹

Referring to the present political situation, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru remarked that he was afraid he might be thought to have become a greater revolutionary as a result of his travels in Europe. The Madras Congress could be regarded as epoch-making in one sense, namely, that it passed several resolutions² which were most urgently needed.

The first important resolution recorded was the one which made clear the goal Indians were striving for. It was often said that we wanted freedom, Swaraj, terms which were not intelligible to everybody. The independence resolution made clear, so far as the Congress was concerned, what sort of freedom we wanted. We wanted

1. 7 January 1928. *The Leader*, 9 January 1928.

2. The important resolutions passed by the Madras Congress pertained to independence, boycott of the Simon Commission, the war danger, the situation in China, the League against Imperialism, the drafting of a constitution and Hindu-Muslim unity.

that in our country we should have complete independence and no other nation should interfere with our administration. It meant that we should have complete control over our army also.

The demand for freedom meant that we would have the right to decide ourselves what, if any, relations we wanted to contract with other foreign countries. We might or might not keep the connection with Britain but that question would only arise after the existing relations were resolved and Indians had complete independent control over the country.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that there were signs of a big war in the near future. The efforts of the government at fortifying the frontiers of India showed that the war, if it came, would be around the boundaries of India. The question to be seriously considered was as to the attitude Indians should adopt in case a war broke out, as they were bound to be called upon by the British to help. The Congress had announced that Indians were not prepared to give assistance to the Government in connection with any such war. This resolution of the Congress was passed after mature consideration of the consequences which were likely to follow India's refusal to respond to the call of the British for assistance during the war.

Referring to the Hindu-Muslim unity resolution,³ Mr. Nehru expressed the hope that further unity efforts would be crowned with success.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru told the people that if they really wished to assist the Congress in boycotting the Simon Commission and in pushing on other work, mere sympathy would be of no avail. He appealed to the people to cooperate with the town Congress Committee in doing actual work.

³ This comprehensive resolution recommended joint electorates, reservation of seats, introduction of the Reforms in N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan, re-distribution of provinces on a linguistic basis and the immediate formation of Andhra, Utkal, Sind and Karnatak. No legislature should interfere with liberty of conscience or intervene in inter-communal matters without the consent of three-fourths of the members of either community. Hindus and Muslims were urged to respect each other and not to undertake forcible conversions.

8. To Mahatma Gandhi¹

Allahabad

11.1.28

My dear Bapuji,

The Working Committee is now meeting in Benares and so I cannot go to Bombay or Sabarmati for some time.

I am loth to inflict another letter on you so soon after my last² but I am very much troubled by your criticism of the Congress resolutions and I feel I must write to you again. You are always very careful with your words and your language is studiously restrained. It amazes me all the more to find you using language which appears to me wholly unjustified. You have condemned in general language the proceedings of the Subjects Committee and specially selected some resolutions for greater criticism and condemnation. May I point out that it is always unsafe to judge on hearsay evidence? You were not present yourself and it is quite conceivable that the opinions you may have formed after a personal visit to the Subjects Committee may have been different. Yet you have chosen to condemn and judge unfavourably the whole committee, or at any rate a great majority of it, simply basing your judgement on the impressions of a few persons. Do you think this is quite fair to the committee or the Congress? You have referred to discipline and to the Working Committee as the National Cabinet. May I remind you that you are a member of the Working Committee and it is an extraordinary thing for a member, on the morrow of the Congress, to criticise and run down the Congress and its principal resolutions? There has been a general chorus of congratulations on the success of the Madras Congress. This may be wrong or without sufficient basis but undoubtedly there was this general impression in the country and atmosphere counts for a great deal in all public work. And now most people who thought so feel a bit dazed at your criticism and wonder if their previous enthusiasm was not overdone or mistaken.

1. Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 13039.

2. The first letter is not available. In his letter of 17 January 1928, Mahatma Gandhi had written, "Your first letter I destroyed after reading and replying to it. The second I am keeping....."

You have described the independence resolution as "hastily conceived and thoughtlessly passed."³ I have already pointed out to you how the country has discussed and considered this question for years past and how I have personally thought over it, discussed it, spoken about it in meetings, written about it and generally been full of it for the last five years or more. It seems to me that under the circumstances no stretch of language can justify the use of the words "hastily conceived." As for "thoughtlessly passed", I wonder if you know that the resolution was discussed in the Subjects Committee for about three hours and more than a dozen speeches for and against were made. Ultimately as you know it was passed almost unanimously both in the committee and the open Congress. Were all the people in the committee and the Congress who voted for it "thoughtless"? Is this not rather a strange assumption? And why should it not be said with greater truth that the small minority opposed to the resolution were mistaken? You mention that last year the resolution was rejected by the committee. I do not know what inference you draw from this but to me it seems obvious that this can only mean that the committee and the Congress have been eager to pass it in the past as in the present but refrained from doing so out of regard for you. I hope you will agree with me that it is not healthy politics for any organisation to subordinate its own definite opinion on a public issue out of personal regard only.

I am not referring here to the merits of the resolution. But I shall only say this that after prolonged and careful thought a demand for independence and all that this implies has come to mean a very great deal for me and I attach more importance to it than to almost anything else. I have thought over every word you said the other day in Madras on this question and it has merely confirmed me in my opinion. But I doubt if anyone outside a small circle understands your position in regard to this. I am sure that none of the others — liberals etc. — who want Dominion Status think in the same way with you. Yesterday Ali Imam⁴ addressed a meeting here on the Simon boycott. I also spoke for a few minutes⁵ and like King Charles' head independence stepped up and I laid stress on it. After the meeting Ali Imam told me that I did well in laying stress on this; he and his friends would probably come round to this position sooner or later but for the time

³ Article in *Young India*, 12 January 1928.

⁴ (1869-1932); President, All India Muslim League in 1908; Law Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1910-15; Judge, Patna High Court, 1917; Member, Executive Council of the Governor of Bihar and Orissa, 1918; one of the signatories of the Nehru Report, 1928.

⁵ See post, Section 4, item 2.

being they had to be a little restrained as they wanted to carry many people with them. I am sure most liberals welcome the independence resolution, whatever they may say about it, as they feel that it strengthens their position. But whether they like it or not, it passes my comprehension how a national organisation can have as its ideal and goal Dominion Status. The very idea suffocates and strangles me.

I took no special interest in the resolution on the boycott of British goods⁶ chiefly because I felt that it would meet with your strong disapproval and the boycott could not succeed unless a more or less unanimous effort was made. But I have no doubt that it can be made into a partial success if there was some unanimity in our own ranks. You must have read about the wonderful effectiveness of the boycott in China.⁷ There was nothing special in China which we have not got and there is no fundamental reason why we cannot succeed where they succeeded. But granting that it is not likely to succeed, is it such a laughing matter after all? Has our boycott of foreign cloth by *khaddar* succeeded so remarkably — has our spinning franchise succeeded? They have not but you did not hesitate to press them on the country and the Congress because you felt, and rightly, that they would be good for this nation even if they did not wholly succeed.

I remember how Kelkar,⁸ Aney⁹ & Co., even as members of the Working Committee, used to make fun of the Congress resolutions on *khadi*, and it is very painful for me to think that you are also ridiculing important Congress resolutions. The Kelkars & Aneys do not count and I do not care what they say or do. But I do care very much for what you say and do.

Having singled out two resolutions for your special condemnation you casually refer to the others as "several irresponsible resolutions". Excepting the Unity resolution every other resolution of the Congress may come under this heading. And so the labours of the 200 and odd persons in the Subjects Committee and the larger numbers in the Congress are summarily and rather contemptuously disposed of. It is very hard luck on the unhappy persons who, though wanting perhaps in

6. 'With a view to bring about as effective a boycott of British goods as possible, this Congress calls upon provincial Congress committees to organise a boycott of selected British goods having regard to the conditions of each province.'

7. In 1925 a boycott of British goods was organised in China. It lasted for months and caused heavy losses to British traders.

8. N. C. Kelkar (1872-1947); a lieutenant of Lokamanya Tilak; editor of the *Mahratta*, 1896-1918; he later became a responsivist.

9. M. S. Aney (1880-1968); acting President, Indian National Congress 1933; Member, Viceroy's Council, 1942; representative of the Government of India in Ceylon, 1943-47; Governor of Bihar, 1948-52; Member, Lok Sabha, 1959-67.

foresight and intelligence, did not spare themselves and tried to do their best. We have all "sunk to the level of the school boys' debating society" and you chastise us like an angry school master, but a school master who will not guide us or give us lessons but will only point out from time to time the error of our ways. Personally I very much wish that we were more like real school boys, with the life and energy and daring of school boys, and a little less like the right honourable gentlemen who are for ever weighing the pros and cons and counting the cost.

You know how intensely I have admired you and believed in you as a leader who can lead this country to victory and freedom. I have done so in spite of the fact that I hardly agreed with anything that some of your previous publications—Indian Home Rule¹⁰ etc.—contained. I felt and feel that you were and are infinitely greater than your little books. Above everything I admire action and daring and courage and I found them all in you in a superlative degree. And I felt instinctively that however much I may disagree with you, your great personality and your possession of these qualities would carry us to our goal. During the noncooperation period you were supreme; you were in your element and automatically you took the right step. But since you came out of prison something seems to have gone wrong and you have been very obviously ill at ease. You will remember how within a few months or even weeks you repeatedly changed your attitude—the Juhu statements,¹¹ the A.I.C.C. meeting at Ahmedabad and after etc. — and most of us were left in utter bewilderment. That bewilderment has continued since then. I have asked you many times what you expected to do in the future and your answers have been far from satisfying. All you have said has been that within a year or 18 months you expected the *khadi* movement to spread rapidly and in a geometric ratio and then some direct action in the political field might be indulged in—several years and 18 months have passed since then and the miracle has not happened. It was difficult to believe that it would happen but faith in your amazing capacity to bring off the improbable kept us in an expectant mood. But such faith for an irreligious person like me is a poor reed to rely on and I am beginning to think if we are to wait for freedom till *khadi* becomes universal in India we shall have to wait till the Greek Kalends. *Khadi* will grow slowly, and if war comes it will

10. *Hind Swaraj* or Indian Home Rule, written in Gujarati in 1909 during Mahatma Gandhi's return journey to South Africa from England. was a severe condemnation of western civilisation.

11. Mahatma Gandhi was against Council entry, but, under the influence of Motilal Nehru and Chittaranjan Das, who met him at Juhu after his release in February 1924, agreed to a compromise that those who did not believe in the boycott could contest the elections.

grow very fast, but I do not see how freedom is coming in its train. As I mentioned before to you our *khadi* work is almost wholly divorced from politics and our *khadi* workers are developing a mentality which does not concern itself with anything outside their limited sphere of work. This may be good for the work they do, but little can be expected from them in the political field.

What then can be done? You say nothing. You only criticise and no helpful lead comes from you. You tell us that if the country will not even take to *khadi* how can we expect it to do anything more difficult or daring. I do not think the reasoning is correct. If the country does not go ahead politically by one method, surely it is up to our leaders to think of other or additional methods.

Reading many of your articles in *Young India*—your autobiography etc. — I have often felt how very different my ideals were from yours. And I have felt that you were very hasty in your judgements, or rather having arrived at certain conclusions you were over-eager to justify them by any scrap of evidence you might get. I remember how in an article on the "Two Ways"—or some such title—you gave some newspaper cuttings from America about crime and immorality and contrasted American civilisation with India. I felt it was something like Katherine Mayo drawing conclusions from some unsavoury hospital statistics. Your long series of articles¹² based on the French book — *Towards Moral Bankruptcy* — also made one feel the same way. You misjudge greatly I think the civilisation of the West and attach too great an importance to its many failings. You have stated somewhere that India has nothing to learn from the West and that she has reached a pinnacle of wisdom in the past. I entirely disagree with this viewpoint and I neither think that the so called *Rama Raj* was very good in the past, nor do I want it back. I think the western or rather industrial civilisation is bound to conquer India, may be with many changes and adaptations, but nonetheless in the main based on industrialism. You have criticised strongly the many obvious defects of industrialism and hardly paid any attention to its merits. Everybody knows these defects and all the utopias and social theories are meant to remove them. It is the opinion of most thinkers in the West that these defects are not due to industrialism as such but to the capitalist system which is based on exploitation of

12. A series of 8 articles written by Mahatma Gandhi in *Young India* from 1 July to 19 August 1926, based on M. Paul Bureau's *D'Indiscipline des mœurs*, condemning the use of contraceptives.

others. I believe you have stated that in your opinion there is no necessary conflict between Capital and Labour. I think that under the capitalist system this conflict is unavoidable.

You have advocated very eloquently and forcefully the claims of *daridranarayana* — the poor in India. I do believe that the remedy you have suggested is very helpful to them and if adopted by them in large numbers will relieve to some extent their misery. But I doubt very much if the fundamental causes of poverty are touched by it. You do not say a word against the semi-feudal zamindari system which prevails in a great part of India or against the capitalist exploitation of both the workers and the consumers.

But I must stop. I have already exceeded all reasonable limits and I hope you will forgive me. My only excuse is my mental agitation. I did not want to become Secretary¹³ of the A.I.C.C. as I wanted perfect freedom to say and do what I considered necessary. But Ansari pressed me on the ground that many of my resolutions¹⁴ and specially the independence resolution, had been passed by the Congress and I thus had full freedom to work on my own lines. I could not answer this argument and had to accept. Now I find that every effort is being made to belittle and ridicule these very Congress resolutions and it is a painful experience.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

13. Jawaharlal was again elected General Secretary in January 1928 and continued to serve in that capacity till December 1929.

14. In addition to the resolutions on independence and the war danger, Jawaharlal had moved at the Madras Congress resolutions on the League against Imperialism, support of China, and condemnation of restrictions on issue of passports.

9. Statement to the Press¹

Various criticisms and interpretations of the independence resolution have appeared in the press. As there appears to be some misapprehension about this resolution, I desire as a Secretary of the Congress and as the mover of the resolution in the Subjects Committee and in the open Congress to explain its significance. The resolution was not conceived in haste. The subject has been discussed at length in the country for some years and has repeatedly come up before the Congress in various forms. Several provincial Congress committees have adopted it in the past. The mover of the resolution and many others have written repeatedly in Indian and foreign periodicals and addressed numerous gatherings on the subject. Nor was the resolution passed by the Subjects Committee thoughtlessly or in a hurry. It was discussed for about three hours, and more than a dozen long speeches were delivered for and against it.

The resolution, as passed, is quite clear. Complete national independence is a correct legal definition of an independent country. It necessarily involves severance of the British connection as it exists; but it does not mean that there should be no alliance between India and England or any other country. It does not necessarily mean any ill-will to Britain; but it does mean that the question of alliances only arises after independence. Independence also obviously and very specially means the withdrawal of the alien army of occupation in India. There can be no freedom of any kind with a foreign army occupying India as it does in Egypt, controlling and suppressing the nation's activities. The Congress, therefore, demands the withdrawal of the army, as was made clear in the speeches on the resolution. The defence of India can be entrusted to an Indian army, which can have foreign experts as officers if necessary under the control of a National Government.

Independence has been declared as our goal. This does not and cannot mean that there are intermediate goals before independence is reached. Whether it is realisable soon or not depends on the strength of the nation. If the national movement remains weak it will not be realised. Achievement can only come when the strength

1. New Delhi, 12 January 1928. *The Tribune*, 14 January 1928.

to achieve is present. But whether we are strong or weak, the Congress has made it clear that the only goal we are striving for is independence, which naturally involves severance of the British connection and full control over our defence forces and our foreign policy.

10. On Mahatma Gandhi's Leadership¹

Sir,—Some days ago you published in the columns of the *Leader* a report of a speech I delivered at a public meeting in Benares. This report was wrong and misleading, but I did not think it necessary to trouble you with a correction or contradiction. But I find now that at least one newspaper of northern India has commented on it and drawn all manner of inferences which were not justified by what I actually said. I crave your courtesy therefore for these few lines in order to remove any misapprehension that might exist.

My speech was in Hindi, the report is in English. The report refers to 'effete and fossilised' people. My knowledge of Hindi is not sufficient to include any word for fossilised. What I wished to say was that we must develop the spirit of youth and not become unchanging embodiments of age. I laid stress on the fact that this spirit was sometimes to be found more in our elder men than in our youth, many of whom seemed to be born old. An extraordinary inference has been drawn that I was criticising Mahatma Gandhi. This is a monstrous notion. No person who has had a glimpse of him even once, much less one who has had the high privilege of working with him and under him for many years, can call him old in spirit. He is the supreme example of latter day India, of all that is good in youth—energy and action, courage and daring, perseverance and resolution. And if India and any Indian today possesses, in a small measure, any of these qualities it is largely due to his splendid example. We who talk of youth and the call of youth are pigmies before his giant and irrepressible youth.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Allahabad, 21 January 1928. Letter to the Editor, *The Leader*, 25 January 1928.

11. To Mahatma Gandhi¹

Allahabad
23 January 1928

My dear Bapuji,

Your letter² came as a bit of a shock and was painful reading. Painful because with relentless logic you had contemplated certain eventualities which I had not considered possible or even thought of in their entirety. You talk about my carrying on 'open warfare' against you and of 'unfurling my banner'. I have no particular banner to unfurl nor had I thought of the possibility of any warfare between you and me. I had certainly thought of differences of opinion, which may be fundamental, and of my following a line of action in regard to certain matters which may not meet with your approval. But I felt that you would certainly desire me to follow that line, even though you disagreed with it, if you thought that I was quite clear about it in my own mind. And even if there were possibilities of conflict on some points, there appeared to me absolutely no necessity for this difference or conflict to spread to the many other points on which I presumed there would be considerable ground for common action. You have referred to Sastri³ and your relations⁴ with him. Is any assurance from me necessary that nothing that can ever happen can alter

1. Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 13040.

2. In his letter of 17 January 1928 Mahatma Gandhi had written: "I give you all the freedom you may need from the humble, unquestioning allegiance that you have given me for all these years... I see quite clearly that you must carry on open warfare against me and my views. For if I am wrong I am evidently doing irreparable harm to the country and it is your duty after having known it to rise in revolt against me... The differences between you and me appear to me to be so vast and radical that there seems to be no meeting ground between us. I can't conceal from you my grief that I should lose a comrade so valiant, so faithful, so able and honest as you have always been; but in serving a cause, comradeships have got to be sacrificed... I suggest a dignified way of unfurling your banner: write to me a letter for publication showing your differences. I will print it in *Young India* and write a brief reply."

3. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri.

4. "To take Sastri for instance, he and I differ in the political outlook as poles asunder, but the bond between him and me that sprung up before we knew the political differences has persisted and survived the fiery ordeals it had to go through."

or lessen my deep regard and affection for you? That regard and affection is certainly personal, but it is something more. No one has moved me and inspired me more than you and I can never forget your exceeding kindness to me. There can be no question of our personal relations suffering. But even in the wider sphere am I not your child in politics, though perhaps a truant and errant child?

I should very much like to discuss many things with you and I cannot say whether I shall or shall not change many of my present opinions after my discussion with you. I hope I am not rigid in mind and outlook and nothing could please me more than to be convinced by you. I have wanted to have a good talk with you frequently in times past but you are always so busy and although I saw you often enough before I went to Europe I never had the opportunity I desired. I shall try to come to you as early as possible. Before I do so I shall write to you again and somewhat more fully some of the conclusions I have arrived at after some thought. I do not want to trouble you, specially in your present state of health, with long letters. But I think that if I write to you about my present views it would clarify matters and save time when we discuss them.

I do not quite appreciate your suggestion to publish my previous letter and to comment on it. Should you wish it of course you can do so. But it was an entirely personal letter and I do not see why the public should concern itself with it. Perhaps you may have been led to think that I am going to start some kind of a campaign against your ideas and it was desirable that before doing so some kind of statement should be issued. I have no such intention and if I criticise anything or defend anything against your wishes it will be done incidentally only. May I however warn you against believing everything that appears in the papers. The other day I spoke at Benares at a public meeting. I spoke in Hindi and my speech was wholly distorted in the English report and I was made to say something which I had never thought of. This was commented upon by the *Tribune* of Lahore, and may be other papers and it was made out that I was attacking you. This was a monstrous notion as I had not referred to you or thought of you in that connection. I have sent a contradiction⁵. There is danger of this happening and I would beg of you not to believe such reports and to give me credit for greater sense and courtesy.

I would therefore suggest that for the present at least you might not publish my letter. But it is for you to judge and if you think it necessary you can publish extracts from it.

5. See ante, item 10.

The last letter I received from father was not a cheerful document. He had evidently been upset by the doctor's reports about the state of his eyes and his heart. He has been told that if he does not take great care he may lose his sight. He talks in his letter of the "approaching end" and appears to be very dispirited. I want to meet him in Bombay on Feb. 6th when he lands. If he agrees I should like him to go with me to Sabarmati straight from Bombay.

Please do not trouble to answer this letter. There is nothing to answer. I shall try to follow it up after a week or so by another letter.

With love,

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

12. Statement on the Independence Resolution'

In view of the importance of the independence resolution of the Madras Congress, it is desirable that the fullest publicity be given to it and that all its implications and consequences explained at public meetings and in the Press. The following points are noted in the hope that they may prove of some assistance to Congress committees and Congressmen generally.

There is no conflict between 'Independence' and 'Swaraj'. No such issue as "Independence Vs. Swaraj" arises, or one being greater or more comprehensive than the other. Swaraj can and does mean complete freedom, but owing to certain happenings in past years it had come to signify in the minds of many something very short of full freedom. An ambiguity and vagueness had crept in and the independence resolution has removed this. A goal must be as definite and clear as possible. Swaraj as used by the Duke of Connaught² probably meant something very different from the Swaraj of a Congressman. Independence therefore does not replace Swaraj. It clarifies it and removes the latent ambiguity.

1. *The Tribune*, 27 January 1928.

2. The Duke of Connaught (1850-1942); third son of Queen Victoria, visited India in 1921 to inaugurate the new building of the Indian legislature.

There has been a tendency in many quarters to interpret Swaraj as Dominion Status and a belief in the inevitability of the British connection. Independence rules out this interpretation and puts an end to this belief as far as the Congress is concerned.

Independence is certainly not a happy word but it conveys a special political significance which is easily understandable. It does not mean isolation. No nation today can be or ought to be isolated and cut off from the rest of the world. There must be to a large extent an interdependence and cooperation for the common good of humanity. A free India will so cooperate with the progressive nations of the world.

Dominion Status means at the least that we must so cooperate with England and her group of nations and have special and more intimate relations with them than with other countries. Independence does not limit our choice or bind us necessarily to any particular group whether it suits us or not. We are free to develop contacts with any nation or group.

Are there any special reasons for us to have more intimate relations with England and her group than with other countries? Her past record in India is all against her. Her present policy raises unanimous protest and is condemned by all parties. What does the British Army stand for today even outside India? In the colonies there is racial conflict and economic discrimination. Indians are humiliated in every way and the lot of the other coloured races is sometimes worse. Even in the colonies where the whites are in a small minority they hold all the power and guard it jealously.

In China and Egypt and Mesopotamia and Persia the role of England has been the main obstacle to freedom. In Europe she is the friend of every reactionary dictator and an enemy of all progressive movements and prevents all endeavours to establish peace on an enduring basis. She has opposed all attempts at compulsory arbitration and disarmament conferences have failed chiefly because of her obduracy. Even her own principal delegate to the League of Nations, Lord Robert Cecil, had to resign because according to him his country was not sincerely trying for peace. England is considered today, and rightly so, the most reactionary force in the world. What reasons thus can India have to develop more intimate relations with her than with other countries? India's willing association with the British group can only mean that we support reaction and war and the suppression of struggling peoples and nations.

What is the position of England and her various dominions today? They have a common culture, largely a common origin and language, same ties of sentiment, and more or less common economic interests. And yet in spite of having so much in common they are drifting apart

specially where economic interests conflict. South Africa and Ireland are continually pulling away from the group. Canada, and in a lesser degree Australia, gravitate economically and culturally towards the United States. A world crisis is exceedingly likely to result in the splitting up of the British group of nations.

In the case of India there is nothing in common with England except the hard and unpleasant fact that we have been ruled and exploited by her for a century and a half. Our economic interests conflict all along the line, and if we ally ourselves to the British group there is bound to be continuous friction and India will either have to break away or be coerced into an unwilling agreement with a policy against her own interests. It is not conceivable that India can remain in the British group and yet be mistress of her destiny.

Can India ever attain Dominion Status and be an equal member of the British Commonwealth? If this happens, India by virtue of her vast population and her tremendous latent resources inevitably becomes the predominant partner in the group. The British Commonwealth would be dominated by India and the centre of gravity would shift from London to Delhi. It is not conceivable that England or her dominions will agree to this. It would be easier to deal with India as an independent power than as a boss of their own concern.

It is thus difficult to conceive of a free India in the British Commonwealth. It is possible however for her to become a nominal member of the group with a semblance of political power but without an effective voice in important matters of domestic and foreign policy, financially a thrall of London, and being made to play the imperialist game for the benefit of England. This is something very far from Swaraj. The cooperation of the lion and the lamb is bound to result, as it has always resulted, in the lamb being inside the lion. The subjection of India will thus continue, though perhaps in a different form. There are thus only two alternatives for us, and no possibility of a third way, remaining a subject country and gaining complete independence.

An important aspect of the independence resolution, and one to be laid stress on, is its psychological reaction in India and abroad. It helps to create a mentality of freedom which no amount of talk about Dominion Status can do. In foreign countries no one appreciates the idea of Dominion Status and when told that India wants this status, the natural assumption is that India is not very much dissatisfied with British rule as she is still prepared to continue her close relations with England.

If India has a message to give to the world it is clear that she can do so more effectively as an independent country than as a member of the British group. Even England will listen to her more attentively

If this message comes from a free and separate country than if it is accompanied with economic friction and domestic squabbles which must occur if we are tied to her.

It is also important to lay stress on the immediate withdrawal of the alien army of occupation. The proposal to have ourselves protected by foreigners is most ignoble and must be rejected, whatever the consequences. As a matter of fact the chief function of the alien army is to suppress us. The question of the foreign army raises many issues which will be dealt with in a separate memorandum.

13. To B. Sambamurti¹

14 March 1928

My dear Sambamurti²,

The *Swadhin Bharat Sangha* seems to have vanished into thin air. For the last two months I have been trying to get a copy of its rules and of the resolutions passed at Madras but they are not to be had. I met Govindananda³ at Delhi and he knew nothing about them. This is an extraordinary state of affairs. It is hardly my notion of building up an organisation. I had hoped that we might be able to do something with the *Sangha* but it all seems to have ended in smoke. Can you get into touch with the people responsible for it?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-37/1928, p. 27, N.M.M.L.

2. (1886-1958); joined the Home Rule movement in 1919 and the noncooperation movement the next year; led the Arms Satyagraha in Nagpur, 1927; president, Hindustani Seva Dal, 1929, 1930 and 1932; Speaker, Madras Legislative Assembly, 1937-41.

3. Swami Govindananda (1888-1955); president of the Sind P.C.C. for several years.

14. To Swami Govindananda¹

19.3.1928

My dear Govindanandaji,

I am still awaiting the rules and resolutions of the *Swadhin Bharat Sangha*. Enquiries for them came to me but I have to confess that I am wholly ignorant and have no papers. This is a most unfortunate state of affairs. It was hardly worthwhile making so much noise in Madras if we had no intention of keeping up the organisation. I wish you would move in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-37/1928, p. 25, N.M.M.L.

THE DANGER OF WAR

15. On the Danger of War¹

Jawaharlal Nehru moved :

"This Congress has noted with grave concern the extraordinary and extensive war preparations which the British Government is carrying on in India and in the Eastern Seas, specially in the North West Frontier of India. These preparations for war are not only calculated to strengthen the hold of British imperialism in India in order to strangle all attempts at freedom, but must result in hastening a disastrous war in which an attempt will be made to make India again a tool in the hands of foreign imperialists.

The Congress declares that the people of India have no quarrel with their neighbours and desire to live at peace with them, and assert their right to determine whether or not they will take part in any war.

The Congress demands that these war preparations be put an end to; and further declares that in the event of the British Government embarking on any warlike adventure and endeavouring to exploit India in it for the furtherance of their imperialist aims, it will be the duty of the people of India to refuse to take any part in such a war or to cooperate with them in any way whatsoever."

Mr. President and comrades — This session of the Indian National Congress will have many important resolutions to consider and adopt. But I venture to say that not one of them will be more important than the one I have just now placed before you. It is important because any war nowadays is an international disaster. It must result in terrible slaughter and destruction. It must let loose, as the last war let loose, the floodgates of hatred and barbarism. When all countries and all nations are linked together and cannot be separately considered it is inconceivable, even if a war is fought outside the frontiers of India, that it would leave India untouched. We have intimate connection with any such war because it is likely to be fought very near our frontiers and India is very likely to be involved in it. If there is such a

1. Report of Proceedings of the Indian National Congress, Madras, 1927, pp. 4-9.

war, you and I will not sit peaceably holding our conferences and congresses. Indeed, we may ourselves hear the roaring of cannons and we may see bombshells dropping from aeroplanes upon our peaceful villages. It is very important also because such a war may result — I hope it does not result — in strengthening British Imperialism to such an extent that it may make it more difficult for us to achieve freedom. It may remove for a generation or two our hope of freedom, so that in any event we cannot ignore any preparations for war or any chance of war.

No man or woman can ignore it, least of all an Indian who desires to achieve freedom for his country. It is a well known fact that all countries are preparing more or less for war. It is not England only; it is every country because in Europe today there is fear. Europe is in the grip of fear and out of fear comes hatred and out of that comes violence and barbarism. Every country in Europe hates every other country. The most feared and hated country in Europe is England. There is talk of disarmament, there is talk of peace. But those of you who have taken the trouble to study what has been happening at Geneva and elsewhere will realise that all this talk of disarmament is mere camouflage. Today Europe is perhaps a greater powder magazine than it was in 1914 when the last Great War broke out. War has not broken out yet because all nations are exhausted. But all the seeds of war are present and at present in greater number than they were thirteen years ago. When you look at the Balkans, Poland, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania and Russia, everywhere there is preparation for war, and there is chance for war. Let us see what attitude the country with which we have most relations has taken in these war preparations and in this talk of peace and disarmament. We are specially interested in Britain's attitude. We have had in recent times various disarmament conferences at Geneva. There was a Naval Disarmament Conference also. But these conferences failed largely because Britain could not agree to proposals made by other countries. Indeed in the past Britain has definitely refused to accept the principle of compulsory arbitration with a little country like Switzerland because it may be giving up a dangerous principle! It has stood for its right to wage war without any reference to the League of Nations or to any other authority. At the last meeting of the Assembly of the League of Nations Sir Austen Chamberlain made an extraordinary speech on behalf of England. He stated that he was not prepared to sacrifice the empire for the vague ideals of peace and disarmament of the League of Nations. For him the British Commonwealth was a greater thing than those ideals.

What is the empire but India? It comes to this; for the sake of India, to hold India under subjection, Sir Austen Chamberlain and the

British Government cannot agree to the principles of disarmament or peace. It is well recognised in Europe, especially by small nations who are always raising this question in the League of Nations, that England is the greatest obstacle today in the attainment of disarmament or world peace. I should like to indicate to you some of the war preparations which England is making. You know that preparations for war are secret preparations. Nations do not advertise when they are going to prepare for war. Nonetheless when preparations are being carried on on a most extensive scale—on the scale which England has been carrying on—it is impossible to hide them. So some of these things have come to light. The biggest and one of the latest things we have had for a number of years before us is the Singapore base.² Why is England spending millions and millions of pounds and making this great naval base at Singapore? Surely it can only be a challenge directed against some of the powers which have interests in the Pacific and round about the Eastern Seas. It is primarily directed against China and Japan, also against France, for, if there is a war there is a danger of France declaring war against England. Then England can threaten French possessions in Indo-China from Singapore. It is also directed against the Dutch East Indies, because England can force Holland to be neutral in case of war. It is directed partly at any rate against America and American Dominions in the Pacific, because in case of conflict England could sweep down on the Philippine Islands and take possession of them. It is chiefly directed against India because it is for the retention of India that all these things are done. Imagine that there is a struggle in India, then, the Singapore base will facilitate the transport of troops from Australia to India and in many other ways will help the British in taking the offensive in India. So much for the Singapore base.

Then, we have another naval base which is being made at Trincomalee³. We have also the great Royal Indian Navy which has recently been created with a flourish of trumpets. Whatever it may be, it is not an Indian Navy except perhaps that the expenses for it will come out of the Indian Exchequer. This Navy is merely an adjunct of the British Navy to help the British Government against India although it may be at our cost. Again, I should like to draw your attention to the

2. After the Washington Naval Conferences (1921-22) the Admiralty began the construction in 1924 of a first-rate naval base at Singapore. The building work which was stopped by the Labour Government in 1924 was renewed by the Conservatives in 1926. It was completed in 1938.

3. Trincomalee, on the east coast of Sri Lanka, was a land-locked harbour used by the British from the time of its capture in 1795 to control the Bay of Bengal.

rapid development of the transport system in India, especially in the North-Western Frontier Province, western Punjab and the North-East Frontier in India. War nowadays very largely depends on transport. That is why the transport system has been perfected. Strategic railways have been laid all over the North-Western Frontier. You have heard of the Khyber Pass Railway.⁴ You will also hear subsequently of other strategic railways which are being built at great cost for military reasons. When military reasons are considered, cost is no consideration. Military roads have been built from the Khyber Pass, from the Punjab, from the North-West Frontier right up to Karachi. Motor lorry services have been started from Karachi to Peshawar. All this will facilitate the transport of troops and other materials in time of war. Although railways are there, railways might perhaps not be suitable—they may perhaps have strikes to contend against; therefore the whole military machinery of England is being made self-sufficient.

Now let me come to the North-Eastern Frontier in Assam. Recently you might have noticed in the papers, that proposals are being considered that a part of Assam to the north-east of India may be converted into a new military province, like the North-West Frontier, to facilitate the carrying on of war there, if necessary. For this purpose roads are laid. Railways are projected between Bengal and Burma and even between Burma and Assam. You may remember that the *Forward* of Calcutta was some time ago banned from entering Burma. The reason why it was banned was that it published and criticised something about these military roads in Assam, and the proposal to create a new military province.

Let me now go back to the North-Western Province where there is an extraordinary concentration of air force and tanks. Those who know have told us, it is the finest and best equipment that any army possesses. Karachi has been created an air-base⁵ and other bases in the North-Western Province are being prepared; so that province is today full of activity for preparations for war. Two proposals have been made in England and also in Anglo-Indian journals in India which, although officially denied in Parliament, persist in getting publicity in the press. These periodicals are supposed to know what the government are doing and these proposals are of the greatest interest to us. The first was that

4. The construction of the Khyber railway was sanctioned in September 1920 and work on it began in November. It was completed by 2 November 1925.
5. This is a reference to the Imperial Airship Scheme of 1927 under which a mooring mast was constructed at Karachi airship base.

a part of the British Expeditionary Force⁶ should be stationed in India because there is more danger of war in Asia than in Europe. Therefore, it is desirable that that force should be ready in India and should immediately start war-like preparations when necessary. The second proposal was that these highly developed mechanised forces should be used when there is any danger of war. The procedure that England should adopt was, as coldly stated in the English Press, to be not to wait for an attack but to make a forward spring into Central Asia across Afghanistan in one sweep. This was proposed because just in the same way Germans are supposed in their attack on France to have made a forward spring across Belgium.

I should like to tell you one or two things also in connection with the war preparations of Britain to which a friend of mine has drawn attention. He himself is a famous doctor and he tells me that a large number of persons have received a circular letter from the Medical Military Department in India. This letter has been issued to every member of the Civil Military Department and he has been asked if he is prepared in case of emergency to serve as a Medical Military Officer. Another letter has been issued to all military doctors who have served in the last war asking them if they are prepared to join the Medical Reserve. Friends, I should like you to consider what all this means. When this resolution was moved in the Subjects Committee, some people thought that it was rather an unnecessary resolution. They have not heard of any military preparations and they do not know anything of the coming war. They think that our domestic problems are more important. They ask, why we should waste time and energy over what might be happening in the North-West Frontier Province. I beg of you to consider whether these few facts are not sufficient to make you realise the great danger of war that exists in the world and round about India in particular. If such a danger exists, are you prepared to take no notice of it, but discuss only petty problems?

Two more things I want to tell you in connection with these preparations. The recent treaty between England and Mesopotamia — the Anglo-Iraq Treaty⁷ — is one. And the second is the Amir's visit⁸ to India. I would not be surprised if the cordial welcome the British Government extended to him, has not something to do with the

6. In 1914 Lord Haldane had created the British Expeditionary Force of six divisions for immediate dispatch to Europe.

7. In 1924 a treaty was signed between Iraq and Britain providing for the maintenance of British military bases in Iraq.

8. King Amanullah passed through India on his way from Afghanistan to Europe in December 1927 and was given an aerial escort.

desire of the British Government to win him over. It may be we are not in a position to stop the war. But at any rate we are in a position to make it clear what attitude India will take up and it is quite possible and conceivable that if India's attitude is clearly stated then England too may change hers. England might not dare to provoke war when she knows that India would not support the war but actually hinder the conduct of the war. Now this resolution lays down clearly that India has no quarrel with her neighbours. As to the declaration itself, it is our right to determine whether we shall join the war or not. Thirdly, another declaration follows and that is the most important. In case war comes and an attempt is made to exploit you, you will refuse to be exploited and to take any part in the war. I trust that if war comes, and I think war may be nearer than most of us imagine — it may come in a year, two years or five years — this National Congress will follow up the lead given today. I also trust that the Indian people will rally round the Congress forgetting their petty differences and generally adopt the attitude which the Congress has suggested and refuse to participate in the war and suffer any consequences that might follow. I am convinced that if the Congress and the Indian people adopt this attitude they will emerge from that great ordeal much better, much freer and India will be a unified independent nation.

16. To Chaudhri Raghubir Narain Singh¹

15.3.1928

My dear Chaudhri Sahab,

I enclose a copy of the letter I am sending to the Secretaries of the Punjab and Delhi P.C.Cs. I am sure you will be able to help us greatly in the matter. Mahatma Gandhi is very keen on these facts. A threatening war situation is developing in India and we must be prepared for it. I do not expect much from the Delhi P.C.C. but I do expect a great deal from you in this matter. I shall be greatly obliged if you will kindly take early steps and let me have the result of your enquiries.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-25/1928, p. 107, N.M.M.L.

17. To Secretaries, P. C. Cs Delhi and Punjab¹

15.3.1928

Dear Sir,

Many reports² have reached us of great activities in recruiting in the Punjab and in the districts surrounding Delhi, which as you know are well known areas for recruiting. We want to have full particulars to enable us to give publicity to it. Mahatma Gandhi is also greatly interested in the subject and desires to write about it. But we must have authentic information before we can take any steps in the matter. Would you kindly take early steps to get this information from your district committees and from such individuals as may be in the know. Information is required not only on recruiting but also on any other war preparations. An early reply will be appreciated.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-25/1928, p. 105, N.M.M.L.
2. Early in 1928, it was announced in the rural areas of Meerut district that demobilized soldiers of the First World War could enlist again. But this recruiting campaign was not very successful.

18. To Secretary, P.C.C., U.P.¹

March 1928

...I am also very keen on gathering together all the available material on war preparations and the like. I should very much like you to help me to get this material. Could you write to your district Congress committees in the north as well as to such individuals as are likely to be in the know to supply authentic information both in regard to recruiting and any other war preparations? I shall be greatly obliged if you will kindly take early steps in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-25/1928, p. 109, N.M.M.L. Extracts.



WITH CONGRESS WORKERS IN MADRAS, 1927.

THE NEHRU REPORT

1. Circular to Political Organisations¹

Anand Bhawan,
Allahabad
18th January, 1928

Dear Sir,

In continuation of my letter No. G.2 of 28/1322 dated the 2nd January 1928, I am glad to inform you that the All Parties Conference² which met at Benares on the 15th inst., considered besides the boycott of the Statutory Commission, the question of fixing a suitable place and date for the conference between the Congress Working Committee and committees of other organisations to draft a Swaraj Constitution in accordance with the resolution adopted by the Indian National Congress at Madras. The conference after full consideration came to the conclusion that the second week of February at Delhi would generally suit the convenience of representatives of various organisations who will be attending the conference and accordingly fixed the 12th February for the purpose. May I therefore request that you will make early arrangements for the appointment of your committee and for their attending the conference on Sunday the 12th February at Delhi? The exact hour and place of the meeting at Delhi will be announced later.

I shall be obliged if you will kindly intimate the names of your representatives to me at the address noted above.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Meerut Conspiracy Case Papers, Defence Exhibit 145 (22), National Archives of India.
2. The Madras Congress passed a resolution directing the Working Committee to convene an All Parties Conference to draw up a constitution for India acceptable to all parties. This was in reply to Lord Birkenhead's challenge to Indian politicians to produce an agreed constitution for India. This conference first met at Delhi from 12 to 22 February 1928.

2. To Mahatma Gandhi¹

Allahabad

23.2.28

My dear Bapuji,

I wrote to you a few hours ago and informed you that I hoped to be in Sabarmati on Monday or Tuesday night. Immediately after I received a summons from Delhi to go there and remain there for the next fortnight or more to assist in constitution drafting. I have no present intention of remaining in Delhi and I shall try my best to visit you but it may be that I am delayed in Delhi a little. Personally I have had enough of this All Parties Conference. After ten days of it the strain was too great for me and I fled to avoid riot and insurrection! I feel better already after a three days' absence but another dose of all the parties may go to my head. I am thus not at all desirous of attending the meetings in Delhi. But I do not know what might happen. I shall wire to you from Delhi.

Love.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

1. Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 13079.

3. Statement at All Parties Conference¹

Delhi

8 March 1928

Jawaharlal Nehru wishes to state that although he has expressed his agreement with and dissent from some matters dealt with in this report he has a fundamental objection to the basis on which the constitution

1. Report on All Parties Conference, Delhi, February-March 1928. Extracts.

is sought to be drafted. He is of opinion that it should be made clear that the constitution should establish a democratic socialistic republic in India. He also thinks that territorial elections should as far as possible give way to elections by economic units. Even if this cannot at present be done to any large extent, a beginning should be made wherever practicable. Representation by economic units will not only ensure real and effective legislatures representing the life of the country and every interest therein, but will also automatically do away with the problem of communal representation.

4. To Syed Mahmud¹

17.3.28

My dear Mahmud,

Your letter. I returned from Delhi last Monday. I shall be here till the end of the month. Early in April I shall probably go to Punjab for a week or 10 days. Kamala and Indira may go to the hills in April.

Gandhiji was very weak when I saw him but he has been thus for long. Outwardly there was no great change in him. He intends going to Burma and Singapore this summer. I hope he goes. This will do him good.

Surely you do not expect me to write a long account of the All Parties Conference. Why are you so much out of touch with public affairs? Have you lost all interest in them? And if so why would you like me to write about them? Try to bestir yourself and make yourself follow the doings of the world and India in particular. The conference was a very trying affair. It was a battle² of a few extremists on either side — Jinnah and his group on one side and the Hindu Mahasabha on the other — the others had little say in the matter except when they got angry. I was thoroughly fed up with both the groups. Still I think that things are moving slowly.

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. The demands of the Muslim League for reservation of seats, extension of the Reforms to N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan and the separation of Sind, were all opposed by the Hindu Mahasabha.

By the way there is a great deal of talk of war in the near future. You had better prepare yourself for it.

Father is still in Delhi. He is not expected back for a fortnight. Love.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

5. To the Members of the Congress Working Committee¹

Allahabad
3 May 1928

The All Parties Conference will be held as previously fixed on the 19th May in Bombay. Members of the Working Committee are no doubt aware of the developments which have taken place since the All Parties Conference adjourned and prior to it. It was stated on behalf of the Muslim League in the final stages of the conference that they were not prepared to consider other constitutional matters unless and until an agreement was arrived at in regard to the communal issue. When the conference discussed the report of the sub-committee the members of the Muslim League did not take any part in the proceedings. The representatives of the Hindu Mahasabha at the conference also took up an attitude which was not conducive to any compromise being arrived at.

Subsequently the Hindu Mahasabha met at Jubbulpore and passed a resolution of strong protest against All Party recommendations specially in regard to the separation of Sind.² It is clear therefore that no help can be expected under the circumstances from the representatives of the Mahasabha and probably of the Muslim League. In regard to one or two matters the attitude of the Sikh League is also uncompromising.

It is too much to be hoped that these conflicting viewpoints will be able to accommodate themselves and will agree to a common formula.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-63/1928, p. 39, N.M.M.L.

This was drafted by Jawaharlal. The text is incomplete.

2. The Mahasabha, meeting under Kelkar's presidentship, objected to political reforms being given a communal character and to the separation of Sind for obviously communal reasons.

We are therefore to prepare ourselves for this conflict and to decide on our course of action.

Suggestions were made that the All Parties Conference might be postponed. This proposal was firmly rejected. It is better to face the trouble as we come to it than shirk the issue. The President also desires me to draw your attention to these and suggests that the Working Committee should manage to carry on with its own programme despite all defections. In the main this programme will be naturally based on the resolution of the Congress but of course it is open to the committee to make such alterations in it without going against the Congress mandate as it desires to do. We have seen in the past that a large number of organisations in the country for instance, the All India Liberal Federation, the Home Rule League, the Southern India Liberal Federation, the Bengal Liberal League and various other organisations were in substantial agreement. It should not be difficult to secure the consent of most of the organisations represented at the conference to any reasonable plan which provides for all interests.

The members of the Working Committee present at the conference should be ready with a clearly thought out programme which they must press the conference to accept. It is for them to think this out previously. It is upto us to hold a meeting of the Working Committee at least three days before the conference. We shall meet in Mrs. Sarojini Naidu's room at 5.30 p.m. and I trust you will make it convenient to attend the meeting. The All Parties Conference will be held on 19th May at Congress House, Bombay.

6. To J. N. Gupta¹

Allahabad
9 May 1928

Dear Sir,²

I am in receipt of your letter of the 7th May. The question of the army and military training was not forgotten in the discussions at the

1. A.I.C.C. File No. AP-9/1928, pp. 7-9, N.M.M.L.

2. A resident of Shahabad, Bihar.

All Parties Conference. But the details as to the training and military schools etc., cannot form part of the permanent Constitution. So far as the Constitution is concerned the first important thing to have in it is that the army should be controlled by the popular Assembly or Parliament. This has been laid down in Delhi, if not very clearly at any rate inferentially. The only other possible reference to military training in the Constitution can be a provision for compulsory training.

Apart from the Constitution however it is desirable to pay a good deal of attention to this question because it is a vital matter for us. I am glad that you have been thinking about it and have written a book on the subject. I hope you will send me a copy of this book when it is ready.

In your note you suggest certain improvements in the army with a view to make India help the empire in the coming war. Personally I am entirely opposed to the idea of India giving the slightest help to England in the course of such a war. I hope on the contrary that India will obstruct it in every possible way.

I also think that every single British soldier should be withdrawn from India not because he is expensive but because he has no business in this country.

I do not know if you have paid much attention to the modern developments in the army. The old infantry and cavalry are about as useful now in modern warfare as people with bows and arrows. What counts today is the mechanical element, tanks, aeroplanes, gases and the like. It is quite conceivable that you may build up an army on the lines you have suggested and yet be as weak in defence as we are today.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. Interview to the Press¹

Q. What are your views on the decisions of the Bombay session of the All Parties' Conference?

1. Bombay, 22 May 1928. *The Hindu*, 27 May 1928.

Jawaharlal Nehru : Frequent conferences are held, but very little work is done; but I am prepared to work and cooperate with any organisation so long as the fundamental problem is to get our freedom. My faith is that action alone will bring us Swaraj.

Q. Do you agree with Pandit Motilal Nehru that Dominion Status is welcome?

J. N.: It is a knotty question, and I cannot say Yes or No. I do not think that there is the slightest chance of Dominion Status ever being given to India, because it is not to the advantage of India and England. I can conceive, however, of an independent India being in alliance with England, and coming to an agreement about cooperating in certain fields. But I think that a healthy atmosphere can never come through pressure, so long as any feeling of superiority on one side and inferiority on the other side continues. I believe in mutual cooperation between nations. Indeed I believe in world cooperation and not in cooperation between two or three nations in opposition to another group. It seems to me that the British Empire at present is definitely a group opposed to a large number of other groups. It is not interested in evolving a larger group comprising all the nations of the world. This mutual rivalry between the British Government and other groups is a continual danger to world peace. This peace, I feel, can only come when there is no domination of one country over another. Therefore, I think that the first essential is that India should become completely free.

Q. Is the British public aware of India's feelings?

J. N.: As far as the larger British public is concerned, it does not think about India and cares less about it. The political section of it, to whatever party it might belong, excepting certain individuals, appears to have no desire whatever to grant any measure of freedom to India. But the British public have a way of adapting themselves to circumstances. I am sure that they will adapt themselves to Indian feeling when they are convinced that there is enough strength behind the Indian demand and that it is unsafe for them to resist it any longer.

Q. Can the British public be sounded?

J. N.: I do not believe in any propaganda in England. It is not a question of convincing anybody. The only conviction that is required is the conviction of India's strength. The day this conviction dawns in the minds of British people, they will approach the subject in a proper

frame of mind. Thus the problem for India is one of developing her strength. How to develop this strength both in the political and economic sphere has been discussed and partly laid down by the Congress. I am sure every Indian, whether he is a Congressman or a Liberal, desires full independence for India. It is inconceivable that any Indian should not do so. Some Liberals, however, state that they are content with Dominion Status. I take it, that this is because they feel it is easier to achieve. I think that it is equally easy or difficult to attain independence. It is not a question of convincing anybody in favour of independence, because everybody is heartily so convinced. It is only a question of developing strength. The moment we succeed in doing so, the Liberals will welcome independence as much as anyone else.

8. The Ideal of Indian Freedom¹

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru maintained that the full freedom of India was not compatible with the ideal of Dominion Status. The comparison of Canada, Australia or South Africa did not hold good with regard to India. The question of the defence of India frightened a number of people. But as a matter of fact there was no obvious danger of invasion from any outside country. Even if there was invasion, India would be able to face it. Indian soldiers were inferior to none in the world. They had shown their capacity to fight in the great war. Officers could be trained in a short time from the intelligent material always at hand provided there was a sufficient incentive.

1. Speech at Hubli, 24 May 1928. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 26 May 1928.

9. To S. S. Mirajkar¹

11 June 1928

Dear Comrade Mirajkar,²

The short accounts in the press about the All Parties Committee³ are very misleading. The committee has not given much thought so far to the question of labour.⁴ As you know the main problem before it is the communal problem. As soon as this bugbear is removed some attention can be paid to other important subjects.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-52/1928, p. 15, N.M.M.L.
2. A trade union leader and Communist of Bombay who was one of the accused in the Meerut Conspiracy Case; spent over ten years in jail; Mayor of Bombay 1958.
3. The committee to recommend the principles of a Constitution for India, set up in Bombay in May 1928, under the chairmanship of Motilal Nehru, and with 9 members including Sapru, Ali Imam, Jayakar and Subhas Bose. Though Jawaharlal was not a member, he gave the committee a great deal of assistance.
4. S. S. Mirajkar in his letter dated 7 June 1928 had written to say that he had read in the papers that the All Parties Committee had determined the rights of labour and peasants, and asked Jawaharlal to give him an idea as to what these rights were.

10. To M. M. Banaji¹

11 June 1928

Dear Sir,²

I am in receipt of your letters dated the 20th and 30th May. I have little to add to what I have already informed you. In no case have

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 104/1928, p. 269, N.M.M.L.
2. A resident of Andheri, Bombay.

personal invitations been issued to members of any community. We have only invited organisations to send representatives. If these organisations do not send the right kind of representatives the fault is not ours. No person attending the conference, Hindu, Parsi or Muslim, was invited in his personal capacity.

As regards the committee appointed in Bombay it is not for me to explain or criticise the action of the conference. They were at perfect liberty to choose whom they wanted to and they elected the committee in question.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. To Hosakoppa Krishna Rao¹

11 June 1928

Dear Mr. Krishna Rao,²

Thank you for the copies of your draft constitution which you sent me. They have been placed before the All Parties Committee. I agree with a great deal of what you have said but I am very much afraid that the members of the committee will not dare to suggest a radical scheme for the States. It will be for you and for the people of the States to bring our politicians up to the mark.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 104/1928, p. 207, N.M.M.L.

2. A Congressman from Kadur district in Mysore State.

**12. To Saifuddin Kitchlew, Deva Ratan Sharma
and Mangal Singh¹**

11 June 1928

Dear Sir,

As you are aware the committee appointed by the All Parties Conference at Bombay to consider and determine the principles of the Constitution has been holding meetings in Allahabad. The committee has made some progress already and is continuing its sittings daily. It has considered various proposals regarding electorates and the redistribution of provinces. Some of these proposals have been before the public for some time past and the opinions of various organisations in regard to them are well-known. Other proposals considered have been novel ones which have not so far been considered by the public at large or by the organisations represented in the All Parties Conference. It is not possible for the committee to take the public into its confidence regarding these new proposals at this stage. This might lead to heated public debate and a hardening of opinion and would thus make it difficult for them to be considered dispassionately. The committee however feels that before arriving at any decision it would be desirable to confer with representatives of the organisations affected by these proposals and to hear their views in regard to them. This will help the committee greatly in finding a satisfactory and equitable solution of the difficult problems we have to face.

I am therefore directed by the committee to request you to send one or two representatives of your organisation to Allahabad to attend the meeting of the committee on Thursday June 21st at 5 p.m. The meeting will be held at Anand Bhawan. Your representatives need not stay here more than a day or two.

I shall be glad if you will kindly intimate to me the name or names of your representatives attending. The committee desire that not more than two representatives from each of the organisations specially invited should attend.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 104/1928, p. 205, N.M.M.L.

S. D. Kitchlew was at this time Secretary, All India Muslim League, Pandit Deva Ratan, Secretary, Hindu Mahasabha and Sardar Mangal Singh, Secretary, Central Sikh League.

13. To Subhas Chandra Bose¹

27 June 1928

My dear Subhas,²

I have your letter of the 25th. I have shown it to my father. He thinks and I agree with him that it will not be desirable to invite Sir Abdur Rahim³ to the meeting on the 6th July. In case he happens to come it is certain that the meeting will end in a fiasco. His presence will put up the backs of most Hindus present and even the Mohamadans will stiffen up in their attitude. There is no doubt that his coming would be a disaster. It is difficult enough as you well know to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion. It is hardly wise to lessen the faint chances that we may have by inviting Sir Abdur Rahim. But you say that he is not likely to come. That may be so. Even then I do not think it is right for us to attach importance to people like Abdur Rahim. I think the Congress has already gone too far in trying to win over all manner of folk. This is neither good principle nor good expediency. Abdur Rahim is just the kind of man who has made himself impossible like Shafi⁴.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 104/1928, p. 155, N.M.M.L.

2. (1897-1945); born in Cuttack; educated in Cuttack, Calcutta and Cambridge; having qualified for the I.C.S., resigned in April 1921; on return home joined noncooperation movement and became a follower of C. R. Das; arrested in 1924 and detained till 1927, mostly in Mandalay jail; President, Bengal P.C.C. and General Secretary of the Congress, 1927; President of the Congress 1938 and re-elected 1939 defeating Mahatma Gandhi's nominee; resigned presidentship and founded All India Forward Bloc; placed under house arrest at the beginning of Second World War but escaped to Germany in 1941; organised Indian Independence League in South East Asia; organized and led the Indian National Army and was acclaimed as Netaji; after the fall of Japan died in an aircraft accident on 18 August 1945.

3. (1867-1952); a rich zamindar of Midnapore, West Bengal and a successful lawyer of the Calcutta High Court; Judge of the Madras High Court in 1910 and 1920; Member, Bengal Legislative Council in 1926; Minister, Bengal government, 1927; Member, Central Legislative Assembly in 1930; in 1933-34 was the Leader of the Opposition in the Central Assembly and President, Central Legislative Assembly from 1935 to 1945.

4. Sir Mian Muhammad Shafi (1869-1932); a politician of the Punjab and a prominent leader of the Muslim League; Member, Viceroy's Executive Council 1922-1924.

In any event if it is a question of inviting him, that only arises for the full conference, not to a small gathering of a dozen persons or so.

Father thinks that the fewer the men invited the better and he may perhaps cut down the list slightly. J. N. Basu⁵ however will be invited according to your suggestion.

The 6th July has been fixed for the meeting. I take it it will last two or three days if not more. Please see to it that Abul Kalam Azad comes to it.

I hope you will come armed with full figures about the respective Hindu and Muslim populations in the various constituencies of Bengal. This may help the committee. The other figures about population I shall get from the census.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. (1872-1946); a leading liberal politician of Bengal.

14. To K. T. Mathew¹

27 June 1928

Dear Sir,²

I am in receipt of your letter dated the 17th June. This letter was placed by me before the All Parties Committee. Copies of the Swaraj Constitution which you were good enough to send have also been distributed to the members of the committee. This committee as you are well aware is a very small committee. The very object of its formation would have been defeated if every interest had been represented on it. I entirely agree with you that the Indian States' subjects occupy a very important position and it would have been desirable to have them represented. But it is not for me to criticise the conference which elected the committee. As a matter of fact, the point you mention was raised in the conference and subsequently withdrawn, the committee being elected unanimously.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 104/1928, p. 147, N.M.M.L.

2. (1895-1946); Secretary, All-India States Subjects Conference.

I trust that when the draft Constitution is placed before the full conference your representatives will see to it that your interests are entirely safeguarded. Personally if I may say so I am wholly in agreement with your demand. Indeed perhaps I may go a little further still. But you are right in thinking that many of our politicians consider the Indian States as a somewhat thorny problem and are therefore afraid of going into details. It is for you to bring pressure on them and I have no doubt that your point of view will prevail in the end.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

15. Invitation to the Meeting of the All Parties Committee¹

Allahabad
28 June 1928

The committee appointed by the All Parties Conference met here on the 5th June and continued its sittings up to the 22nd June. Much solid work has been done but I am sorry to say that the controversial points have not received a unanimous solution.

I am sure you will agree with me in thinking that the strength of the nationalist case about the kind of Constitution India needs depends in a great measure upon whether the report of this committee is unanimous or not. If unanimous, very considerable weight will naturally be attached to it and its passage through the All Parties Conference will be comparatively easier. But if we are unfortunate enough to continue to differ there is no chance of the opinion of any particular section of the committee being acceptable to all the leading parties in the country. The reactionaries will then have all their own way and it will take a good long time to regain lost ground. It is therefore of vital importance to us all that the report of the committee should be unanimous and we must do all we can to ensure that result.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 104/1928, p. 143, N.M.M.L.

This letter, drafted by Jawaharlal and signed by Motilal Nehru, was sent, among others, to Dr. Ansari, Pandit Malaviya, Maulana Azad, C. Y. Chintamani and Sachchidananda Sinha.

I have fixed the 6th and 7th July for the final meeting of the committee at which we must come to a unanimous decision if an ignominious surrender to the reactionary forces now at work is to be avoided. I need hardly say that the committee is not approaching this matter from party points of view. The members who as you know belong to different parties have agreed to consider the broad national aspects of the questions before them without being tied down by party commitments.

In these circumstances it appears to me very desirable to have the benefit of the advice of a few select friends whose presence at the deliberations of the committee will, I am confident, contribute largely to a successful solution of the difficult problems before it.

I therefore earnestly request you to arrange to come to Allahabad for the 6th and 7th July even at some inconvenience. Please inform me of your arrival by post or telegram and I shall make such arrangements for your comfort as are possible in Allahabad.

16. To Mahatma Gandhi¹

Allahabad
30.6.28

My dear Bapuji,

Father has I believe written to you about Kamala and Indu. Indu I am glad to say has been pronounced to be well but Kamala is supposed to be more or less as she was two years ago. Ansari agrees with the diagnosis but says that only a very small part is affected and this should yield easily to treatment. She looks well. She has a bad cough but I believe this is a separate ailment and has nothing to do with T. B.

I know Kuhnes system fairly well. In fact many years ago I tried it myself. I had no special occasion to do so as I am not in the habit of falling ill. I can't say that it cured me of anything because I was not suffering from anything. But I felt fitter all the same. Kamala has also tried it in the past. I think it would do her good now, but it is difficult to arrange it just now in Mussoorie without breaking off completely with the present doctor. When she comes to Allahabad I shall start it.

1. Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 13444.

The "agreed draft constitution" seems to be as far off as ever. Indeed I think it is further off. Even in our little committee a sufficient amount of heat is engendered and it is not easy to consider the communal question dispassionately. I do not know if anything will happen next week when a final effort is going to be made to settle differences. I doubt it. Everybody thinks he is 100% in the right and the other party is a narrow-minded obstinate pig or a bigot of the worst kind. This does not produce a helpful atmosphere.

One of the wisest things I have done was to withdraw my name from the membership of the committee. As it is, my presence at committee meetings is a trial to all concerned. It is certainly painful to me to have to put up with all that is said and done there and I am sure my occasional intrusions are not welcomed. The committee will be over in a few days but the problem will however remain. The fault must be mine but anyway it results in my feeling always that I do not fit in with anything. I am always the square peg and the holes are all round. I feel very lonely.

I trust Mahadeva is quite well now.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

17. To Syed Mahmud¹

30.6.28

My dear Mahmud,

Your letter from Hyderabad has just come. Also the copy of the address which Ross Masud² delivered at Poona. I shall read this with interest. I have already seen extracts from it in the papers.

Kamala is in Mussoorie at the Savoy Hotel. She is not well and is troubled greatly by a cough. I took Ansari there to examine her. He was of opinion that she had lung trouble again although it was not much. I hope to go to Mussoorie again in about a fortnight.

The All Parties Committee has not progressed very satisfactorily. You say that you heard somewhere that father is opposing the Muslim

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. (1889-1937); grandson of Saiyad Ahmad Khan and son of Justice Syed Mahmood; Director of Education in Hyderabad for several years and Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University, 1929 to 1933; later appointed as Minister for Education, Bhopal State.

demands. He is opposed to one part of them and in theory so am I. As a compromise if the contending parties agree of course anything is acceptable to him. But when parties do not agree one has to proceed on some principles. The main items in dispute as you know are the N.W.F.P., Sind and the reservation of seats for majorities. So far as the first two are concerned the opposition of the Hindu Sabha though strenuous is unreasonable and can be ignored. But the real difficulty arises in regard to the reservation of seats for a majority, specially in the Punjab. Both the Sikhs and the Hindu Sabha are violently opposed to this and all constitutional and democratic theory is with them in this point. The Sikhs would be nowhere with such a reservation. As a matter of fact we have carefully calculated the figures for all the districts in the Punjab and we have found that the reservation of seats for the Muslim majority is not only wholly unnecessary as the Muslims are bound to have a majority but it is positively harmful to them. From my point of view, which is purely economic, it will be very harmful also and prevent the real issues being considered. It seems to me that we must tackle the problem and solve it once for all and not have anachronisms based on unreal communal differences in our Constitution, specially when it can be demonstrated that the majority Muslim community is really the gainer. Safeguards can be and have been provided for all contingencies and the fullest cultural autonomy granted by the creation of special communal councils to look after cultural and educational matters. This is the only real point at issue. So far there has been no agreement. There is going to be a full meeting of the committee on July 6th to which a number of non-members have been invited, among others Ansari, Shaukat, Shafi Daud,³ Khaliq, Kitchlew and some others. I wish you would come also. Father would like you to.

As for my presidentship of the Congress, don't worry. I had rather not preside. The real objection to me is not youth or jealousy but fear of my radical ideas. I do not propose to tone down my ideas for the presidentship.

If Ross Masud comes here I shall be very glad to meet. I have heard so much of him but I don't think I have ever met him.

About the article for the *Searchlight* I am afraid I cannot write to order. I must be in the mood for it.

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

Do come for the 6th.

3. Maulana Shafi Daudi (1863-1949); a Swarajist leader of Bihar.

18. Resolution on Reservation of Seats¹

We are unanimously opposed to the reservation of seats in the legislatures either for majorities or minorities and we recommend that no such reservation should be provided for in the constitution. But if this recommendation is not accepted and an agreement can be arrived at only on a reservation of seats on the population basis we recommend that such reservation may be made for majorities or minorities without any weightage and with a clear provision that it shall automatically cease at the expiry of ten years or earlier by the consent of the parties concerned.

Anand Bhawan, Allahabad
July 7th, 1928

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 110/1928, p. 97, N.M.M.L.

Jawaharlal was one of the twenty signatories to this resolution, but the Nehru Committee was unable to adopt it. The committee recommended that in provinces other than the Punjab and Bengal an exception had to be made in favour of Muslim minorities by permitting reservation of seats, if desired by them, in proportion to their population, both in Central and Provincial Legislatures.

19. To Choithram P. Gidwani¹

August 6, 1928

Dear Sir,²

The President of the A.I.C.C., Dr. Ansari, who is at present in Allahabad desires me to acknowledge your telegram to him.

He has invited the Provincial Congress Committees to send representatives to the All Parties Conference. Similar invitations were also issued for the meeting of the conference held in Bombay. All the invitations for the conference have been issued by him from time to time usually in consultation with his colleagues of the Congress Working

1. A.I.C.C. File No. AP-16/1928 (Pt. I), pp. 25-27, N.M.M.L.

2. (1889-1957); a prominent Congress leader of Sind.

Committee and sometimes at his own discretion. There is no resolution naming the organisations to be invited which fetters his discretion in any way. The object he has aimed at in issuing invitations is to have as many viewpoints as possible represented. In Bombay, last May, his attention was drawn to the fact that the Communist Party and the Workers and Peasants Party³ were not represented. He thereupon directed me to issue invitations to these organisations also.

As you are aware the All Parties Conference does not usually come to decisions by majority voting. The numbers present at the conference do not make much difference to the decision that might be arrived at.

The President has felt that the provincial Congress committees in many provinces are far more powerful and representative organisations than many All India organisations. At the Delhi meeting of the conference some of the organisations invited were represented by nearly 30 nominees. No limit had been placed on the numbers although a request had been made that too many should not be sent. The result was that the National Congress, although the convening body, had very few of its representatives in the conference and many of its best people could not attend and give the conference the benefit of their cooperation because they were not members of the Congress Working Committee. Some time before the Bombay meeting this point was raised by the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and great stress was laid on permission being given to them to send representatives. The President felt the force of the argument and acceded to their request. Having done so there was no reason in denying the other provincial Congress committees the right to send their representatives to the conference. A circular letter to this effect was thereupon issued to all provincial Congress committees.

The President does not see how any such arguments apply to the provincial branches of other communal or political organisations. He regrets therefore he is unable to issue any such general invitation.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. In an effort to create a mass revolutionary party with a neutral name Workers and Peasants Parties were formed between 1926-28 in Bengal, Bombay, U.P. and the Punjab.

20. To Swami Krishnanand¹

August 6, 1928

Dear Sir,²

The President of the Congress, Dr. Ansari, who is in Allahabad at present desires me to acknowledge your telegram to him. He has not seen Mr. Govindananda's announcement to which you refer nor is he aware of any special mandate which has been issued to Congress representatives on behalf of the Congress. But quite apart from any mandate it seems to him obvious enough that a representative of the Congress should stand for the principles which have been approved of by the Congress. It would be a travesty of representation if a person claiming to be a Congressman and representing a Congress organisation should take up a position in the All Parties Conference or elsewhere directly opposed to the declared views of the Congress.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. AP-16/1928 (Pt. I), p. 29, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1890); a Congressman of Himachal Pradesh who worked in Sind before independence.

21. To The Secretary, All India Arya League¹

21 August 1928

Dear Sir,

I have just received your letter No. 822 dated 18th August. The Arya Samaj, as you rightly pointed out, is a most important organisation in our country. The fact that it was not invited, I take it, was not due to any doubt about its importance or about its strength but to other

1. A.I.C.C. File No. AP-16/1928 (Pt. I), pp. 71-72, N.M.M.L.

reasons. As Secretary of the Congress I have merely to carry out the orders of the Working Committee and I issued invitations in accordance with these instructions. I cannot therefore say why the Arya Samaj was not invited. But I presume it was not due to any doubts as to its representative character in its own sphere of action. I take it that the Arya Samaj is a body chiefly concerned with religious and social reform in the country. The All Parties Conference was meant to consist of political organisations as well as communal organisations which had been taking a great interest in political matters. It was probably considered that organisations of a purely religious and social kind however important they might be were not necessarily equally interested in political matters. This of course is not wholly true because religion and social reform and politics cannot be easily separated. But an attempt was probably made to confine the conference to such organisations as are primarily political. Hence the Arya Samaj and many other organisations of a like nature, for instance, the Brahm Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj, the Shuddi Sabha, the Tabligh Association, the Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, the Akali Dal and many other similar organisations of whose existence you are doubtless aware were not invited. If an exception was made in favour of any one of these organisations it would be difficult to draw a line anywhere.

I am merely suggesting what I think was the reason actuating the Working Committee of the Congress. The matter as such has not been considered by the committee. So I cannot say definitely what the viewpoint of the Working Committee was or is. Your letter is the first of its kind that this office has received. I am afraid I cannot take any action on it on my own responsibility. I am however, referring the matter to the President of the A.I.C.C.

As a large number of other organisations have been invited I have no doubt that many important members of the Arya Samaj will be present in the conference as representatives of other organisations.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

22. To Khaliquzzaman¹

21 August 1928

My dear Khaliq,

I have been away from Allahabad and I only received your letter of the 15th last night.

It seems to me that the police have no right to a free pass for our conference. They have such a right only when the meeting is a public one. The conference is limited to holders of tickets. The fact that we are issuing tickets to the press does not make it a public gathering nor does it entitle the police to come there as of right. We are entitled to refuse to issue the press ticket to any particular pressman or newspaper. So also we are entirely within our rights in refusing to give the free ticket to the police. Indeed we are equally entitled to refuse to sell the ticket to any individual or policeman. I am quite clear that the police have no right as claimed by them and this should be made quite clear to them. My father however suggests that a press ticket might be given to them. You might therefore issue one press ticket to them and no more. But at the same time you should make the position quite clear and tell them that we are doing this as an exceptional case which we are not going to treat as a precedent. You can also sell as many tickets to them as they agree to buy.

After much hesitation I have accepted the Maharaja's² invitation to stay with him. I must confess that I did not at all like the idea of staying in his palace but I thought that you would be too full and too busy and so perforce I agreed. Said-ur-Rahman has asked me if I want to stay in Qaiserbagh or in Butler Palace. I am writing to him that I prefer the former. This will be nearer the conference.

I hope you have had the press tickets and the visitors' tickets printed. I am having a few special visitors' tickets printed for persons invited by the President. Some chairs for these people should be placed near the dais.

I hope to reach Lucknow on the morning of the 27th.

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. AP-16/1928 (Pt. I), p. 79, N.M.M.L.

2. Maharaja of Mahmudabad (1877-1931); a leading talukdar of Avadh, executive councillor, U.P. 1921-26; one of the signatories of the Nehru Report.

23. Speech at the All Parties Conference¹

The members of the committee, whose report we are considering, have been good enough to commend a little bit of drudgery that I performed for them². It is a little ungracious of me to criticize their work, especially as, perhaps, I know more than any one else how hard they worked on this report.

Why was the committee appointed? We all know that it was appointed principally to find a solution for our communal difficulties. We were faced at Bombay by an impasse and no way out was visible then. Therefore, this committee was appointed and not so much because it was necessary to draft a fine Constitution. Their report testifies to the measure of success that they have attained in finding this solution.

It is a fair solution, just to all parties, and I earnestly trust that the conference will accept it.

Some of the other proposals that the committee has made are to my thinking not so happy. I am specially unable to reconcile myself to Dominion Status and all its implications. What is the meaning of the resolution that we are considering? The preamble tells us that it is open to us to carry on activity and propaganda for independence. But this is a mere flourish, meaning little. The second part of the resolution really commits every organisation and every individual in it to Dominion Status. The speeches in support of the motion, and specially that of the mover, made this even clearer. I wondered when I was listening to them, whether I was not attending a session of the Congress a generation ago. They embody an ideology of a past age utterly out of touch with facts and realities of today. We were told of the injustice in not having Indian governors, Indians in the Service and in the Railway Board. Is this what we have met here for? Is this our idea of freedom? It seems to me that we are drifting back from the 20th century to the ways and methods of the 19th.

We are told that we must be practical, and being practical is taken to mean adherence to an outworn set of ideas, regardless of the changes that have happened in the world. The mover of the resolution told us

1. Lucknow, 29 August 1928. Report of the All Parties Conference, 1928.
2. Jawaharlal acted as the Secretary, All Parties Committee.

that he had learnt politics from John Stuart Mill³ and Green,⁴ the author of *A Short History of the English People*. Eminent men they were, but may I remind him that they are dead and gone and much has happened since then? They are dead as Queen Anne, as Charles I, as Louis XVI of France and as the last Tzar of Russia. The world has moved and changed, and if we are to be practical, let us take stock of the changes that the world has brought. What does the British Commonwealth of Nations, as it is now called, stand for? It stands for one part domineering over and exploiting the other. There are England and the self-governing dominions, exploiting India, parts of Africa, Malaya and other parts of the world. When we obtain Dominion Status, are we going to get promotion from the exploited part to that of the exploiting? Are we going to assist England and the other Dominions in exploiting Egypt and Africa? The thing is inevitable. Dominion Status for India must necessarily mean the break-up of the British Empire as it is today.

Then again we are told that Dominion Status may be obtained by consent, independence only after an appeal to arms or force. I do not know if any one here imagines that Dominion Status is going to be achieved by sweet reasonableness and logic. If so, all I can say is that he is a very credulous individual. Dominion Status or independence both require a sanction behind them, whether that is the sanction of armed force or non-violent force. You will get Dominion Status the moment you make it clear to the British people that unless it is granted they will stand to lose much more. You will get it when they feel that it will be hell for them in India unless they agreed to it. You will not get it by logic or fine phrases. In matters of this kind justice has little place. Therefore both for independence and Dominion Status, a sanction and a force of some kind is necessary. Consent only follows the creation of the sanction. It cannot come without it. Alternatively if Dominion Status can be the result of an agreement between India and England, I see no reason why independence also should not be agreed to between them. We may agree to certain safeguards, if necessary, for British interests, not because we consider that the British are entitled to any safeguards, but as the price of peace in order to avoid bloody warfare and great suffering. Perhaps, it is easier for me to co-operate with the British people than it is for many of those who talk of Dominion Status, but I cannot co-operate on their terms. I shall

3. (1806-73); English philosopher and economist; a leading exponent of Utilitarianism.
4. John Richard Green (1837-1883); eminent British historian. *A Short History of the English People* was published in 1874.

cooperate with them on equal terms only when I have some sanction and force behind me.

I am therefore, interested much more in the creation of this sanction than a fine Constitution. Do it by all means, but remember that in order to enforce it you must have a sanction and that applies both to Dominion Status and independence. Do not be under any delusion that Dominion Status is a matter of consent and easily obtainable and that independence is much more difficult of attainment and can come only through war. If India gets Dominion Status, it necessarily follows that we fit our foreign policy with the foreign policy of England, that we support England in Egypt, China and elsewhere. Indeed the report makes it clear that there should be a joint imperial policy. Are you prepared to be tied to the chariot-wheels of England in this way? Dominion Status involves cooperation between India and England.

Let us consider the various groups in England today. Are you going to cooperate with my Lords Birkenhead and Winterton or with Mr. Lloyd George of the 'Steel frame' and his great supporter in the press, *The Manchester Guardian*, which has called this report that we are considering a piece of lunacy? Or will you cooperate with the valiant Jix,⁵ the Home Secretary in England, who among his merits — and they are few — has certainly the quality of frankness, who stated that the English people had come to India, not for the benefit of India, but to fill their own pockets? Or will you cooperate with the sanctimonious and canting humbugs who lead the Labour Party in England? For my part, I would prefer to deal with the Birkenhead crowd than with MacDonald and Co. Whom, then, do you cooperate with in England? Nobody will have you, nobody will deal with you, but still you go on repeating the worn out formula of making offers and compromises and convincing the British people. You will never do so till you develop the sanction and enforce your will. Therefore, I say to you with all humility that to talk of Dominion Status is to delude ourselves and to give the country an entirely wrong lead. The only practical goal is that of independence, and it is bad policy and worse tactics to agree in any shape or form to Dominion Status, even for a while and even as a compromise.

There is talk of unity amongst various parties and undoubtedly the gathering here is a very representative gathering. But I would beg of you to remember that we represent largely the intelligentsia of this country only. We represent directly at any rate, the two or three or five

5. William Joynson Hicks, first Viscount Brentford (1865-1932); Parliamentary Secretary, Overseas Trade Department 1922-23, Postmaster-General and Paymaster General 1923, Home Secretary 1924-29.

per cent, in this country only. The whole country as we all know, has been convulsed this year by labour troubles. Strikes, lockouts⁶ and shootings and terrible misery involved in all these and the peasant troubles have taken place in different parts of the country. Yet what do you find in the report in regard to these matters? There is hardly anything except a few good principles in the Declaration of Rights and elsewhere. Only a few days ago the government produced a measure, the Trade Disputes Bill,⁷ which is intended to stifle and prevent labour organisation. What have we to say in regard to it? Still more recently a new measure⁸ has been produced to deal, it is said, with Bolshevik agitators in the country. He must be a simple enough person who imagines that a few Bolsheviks and the like or even hundreds of them can create all this labour trouble and peasant trouble in India. This measure is meant to apply to non-Indians. But we all know that there are enough measures in the Statute Book, like the Bengal Ordinance, which can be made to apply to Indians. There is no necessity for any further enactments for Indians. This has been and is the consistent policy of England towards India.

Do you think it is right for us to claim Dominion Status and to put our seal in a way to this policy?

I do submit that it would be a wrong thing and a fatal thing for India to make Dominion Status as our objective. Those of us who think with me have carefully considered this resolution and we have definitely come to the conclusion that we cannot support it. We do not desire, however, to hamper the work of this conference, because we feel that the principal work it has before it is the settlement of the communal issue. We are prepared to help in so far as we can in the settlement of this problem. We have, therefore, decided to dissociate ourselves entirely with this resolution and not to have anything to do with it by way of amendment or otherwise. If you will permit me, Sir, I shall read out the statement which I have already placed in your hands on behalf of members of this conference.

6. There were many strikes and lockouts in 1928, especially those of the textile workers in Bombay, the mill workers in Jamshedpur, and the workers of South Indian and East Indian Railways. The total number of working days lost was 3,16,47,404 and 5,06,851 workers were involved in the strikes.
7. Under the provisions of this bill, it was a penal offence for the workers employed on monthly wages in public utility services to strike without previous notice. Heavier penalties were also provided for persons abetting such offences.
8. The Public Safety Bill was said to be intended to stop the entry of foreign Communist agents into India; the government wanted to be in a position to use the same arbitrary powers against foreigners as they had been using against Indians themselves.

This statement runs as follows :—

“We the signatories of this statement are of opinion that the Constitution of India should only be based on full independence. We feel that the resolution that has been placed before the All Parties Conference definitely commits those who support it to a Constitution based on what is termed Dominion Status. We are not prepared to accept and we, therefore, cannot accept or support this resolution. We recognise that the preamble to the resolution gives us the right to carry on activity in favour of independence, but this preamble does not in any way lessen the commitment contained in the second part of the resolution. We have decided, however, not to obstruct or hamper the work of this conference but we desire to record our considered opinion on this question and disassociate ourselves with this particular resolution in so far as it commits us to the acceptance of Dominion Status. We shall not take any part in this resolution by moving amendments or by voting on it. We propose to carry on such activity as we consider proper and necessary in favour of complete independence.”

24. On the Results of the All Parties Conference¹

The conference had undoubtedly been a tremendous success. As I stated in the conference, I cannot reconcile myself to Dominion Status and I propose to work for independence. But I recognize that it is a great thing to bring so many diverse parties on a common platform with a common programme. Individuals here and there may object and protest, but I hope this conference has given the finishing kick to communalism. The question that will soon face us will be how to devise sanctions to force the will of the conference. I trust if all parties will join in creating and enforcing the sanctions, the problem of freedom for India will be solved.

1. Speech at Lucknow, 4 September 1928. *The Tribune*, 9 September 1928.

25. To C. Vijayaraghavachariar¹

21 September 1928

My dear Mr. Vijayaraghavachariar,
Please forgive me for the delay in answering your letter. I have just returned from Mussoorie.

I am glad you have dropped Panditji from my name. I wish you would also drop the Mr.

I quite agree with you that political meetings nowadays are much too rushed and one hardly has any time to make friends or to cultivate acquaintances. I wish it were otherwise but life itself seems to be more hurried now than it used to be. Anyway I hope that when we meet next I shall have the opportunity of spending sometime with you.

The All India Committee meeting will probably be held on the 20th of next month in Calcutta. As it is the first meeting of the year it is likely to be important. The All Parties report and resolutions will come up for consideration. I am afraid it is difficult for me to suggest whether you should come or not. I would not like to trouble you by too much travelling. But if you could conveniently come it would certainly be a good thing.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(ii)/1928, p. 15, N.M.M.L.

26. To Muhammad Shafi¹

Dr. Ansari desires me to point out that it is impossible for him to say beforehand what the conference will decide in regard to any matter

1. Extract of a letter published in *The Hindustan Times*, 13 October 1928. Sir Muhammad Shafi when invited to attend the All Parties Conference had said: "Invitations had been issued only to those who were expected to support the organisers and their policy." He had further said in his reply to Dr. Ansari: "Provided your Conference agrees to the retention of separate Muslim electorates in the revised Indian Constitution the Punjab Muslim League is willing to cooperate."

before it. As I have already informed you, representatives of all organisations have been invited to this conference and they will no doubt give expression to a variety of views. The fullest liberty to express such views must necessarily be accorded and it is for the conference to accept or reject what it chooses. Neither Dr. Ansari as President of the Congress nor the Congress Working Committee can dictate to this conference or bind it down to any prescribed course of action. Should there be any such attempt, it would give just cause for complaint and resentment to a large number of those who will attend the conference.

27. On the Nehru Report and the Indian States¹

So far as my views are concerned, I look forward to an India which will be independent, wherein both what is now the British part and the Indian States will occupy the same position and have the same powers. I cannot conceive a part of India having responsible government and another part living under a system of feudalism. The report² had been produced by persons resident in British India. It was not for them to lay very great stress on the demands of the people of the Indian States as against their rulers. I have no doubt that many of them were entirely in agreement with those demands and were fully agreeable to the fullest responsible government being accorded to the people in the States. But fundamentally this was a matter for the people of the States to lay stress on.

Looking at it from this point of view, the attitude which the States' people might adopt regarding the Nehru Report would be not so much one of opposition but one of acceptance, subject to reservations, the principal reservation being responsible government as in other parts of India.

1. *The Leader*, 14 October 1928.

2. The Nehru Report accepted Dominion Status as the objective, reservation of seats for two years to Muslim minorities everywhere and to non-Muslim minorities in N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan, separation of Sind and the introduction of the Reforms in N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan.

28 To Balaki Ram¹

16 January 1929

My dear Balaki Ramji,²

Thank you for your letter. The pledge you suggest is good but I do not see how it is possible now to go about asking people to sign it. It will be difficult to organise large numbers of signatures.

As far as I am aware no special effort was made to please the Muslims at the cost of the Sikhs. Indeed the Muslims were not at all pleased. The Sikh attitude did seem to me an unreasonable one. So far as their own province, the Punjab, is concerned, the All Parties Committee accepted the suggestions made by them that there should be no communal representation whatsoever.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(1)/1929 (Pt. 1), p. 57, N.M.M.L.

2. A resident of Gujranwala district, now in Pakistan. He had suggested that every literate Indian should sign a pledge to free the country.

THE INDEPENDENCE
FOR INDIA LEAGUE

1. Provisional Rules of the League¹

The signatories of the statement on independence which was read out by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at the All Parties Conference on the 29th August and others who agreed with them, met on the evening of the 30th August and decided to form a body called the "Independence for India League." The following resolutions were passed by them:—

(1) Resolved that we the members of the Indian National Congress present at this meeting being firmly of opinion that the immediate goal of the people of India should be full independence, do hereby form the Independence for India League.

(2) The object of this League is achievement of independence for India and the League shall carry on propaganda in this behalf.

(3) Members of the League shall also be members of the Indian National Congress.

(4) No member of the League shall advance any claim on behalf of himself or another person or group for political or economic rights based on membership of religion or sect, nor shall he work for or advocate what has come to be called communalism in India.

(5) No member of an organisation which has for its object the attainment of political or economic rights based on membership of religion or sect can be a member of the League.

(6) The League shall oppose communalism in every way, but it may support it when it considers it proper and necessary by mutual arrangement between two or more groups or communities.

(7) Every member of the League shall pay a subscription of Re. 1 per annum subject to rules to be framed hereafter.

(8) A provisional committee consisting of Messrs. Subhas Chandra Bose, Dr. Zakir Husain,² and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is formed to draw up a Constitution and rules of the League to arrange for enrolment of members and the holding of a full meeting of members of the League to adopt this Constitution and to lay down the future programme of the League.

1. Drafted at Lucknow, 31 August 1928. *The Tribune*, 2 September 1928.

2. (1897-1969); Vice-Chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi 1926-48; Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University, 1948-56; Governor of Bihar, 1957-62; Vice-President of India, 1962-67; President of India from 1967 till his death in 1969.

(9) That till the next meeting of the League the following shall act as provincial organisers of the League :—

Bengal	.. Dr. K. L. Ganguly, ³
Behar	.. M. Abdul Bari, ⁴
U.P.	.. Mr. Ganesh Shanker Vidyarthi,
Delhi	.. M. Arif Hasvi, ⁵
C.P. Hindi	.. Mr. V. Subedar, ⁶
Sind	.. Mr. J. Bukharey, ⁷
Ajmer	.. Mr. Arjun Lal Sethi,
Kerala	.. Mr. S. K. Kombrambail. ⁸

The Provisional Committee shall have power to appoint organisers in the remaining provinces.

3. A member of the Jugantar Party who was sent to Germany in 1921 to study military science, but on his return devoted himself to political rather than revolutionary activity.
4. Moulvi Abdul Bari, a prominent Congressman from Bihar who was assassinated on 2 March 1947.
5. Maulana Arif Husain Hasvi, a leading Congressman of Delhi; was imprisoned several times; editor of an Urdu paper *Hurriyat*; died 1936.
6. (1885-1970); Member, A.I.C.C. for twenty years; in 1923, led the volunteer corps in the Nagpur Flag Satyagraha; Secretary and Vice-President of the Mahakoshal P.C.C. for many years; member of the Central Provinces Legislative Council from 1937 to 1939; in 1939, joined the All-India Forward Bloc.
7. A radical Congressman who later joined the Communist Party. After 1947 he was detained under martial law in Pakistan.
8. Journalist and Congressman who was imprisoned several times in the non-cooperation movement; died 1970.

2. To N. V. Gadgil¹

Poona

18 September 1928

The question of the League's relations to communal organisations was discussed at length at Lucknow. We all know that these organisations

1. *The Searchlight*, 26 September 1928. Extracts.
N. V. Gadgil (1896-1966); a leading Congressman of Maharashtra; elected to the Central Assembly, 1934; Union Minister for Works, Production and Supply, 1947-52; Governor of Punjab, 1958-62; Vice-Chancellor of Poona University, 1964-1966.

have many staunch nationalists and believers in independence. But they also undoubtedly have many people who are "communalists" above everything else. Any rule which was vague and which depended on its interpretation on our personal likes and dislikes was likely to be abused and to lead to favouritism. This was bound to result in friction inside our organisation and our effectiveness would be lessened. We, therefore, decided that we must be strict even at the expense of losing some good men. I cannot definitely lay down which organisations now existing would thus be taboo for our members. I have not got their rules or objects before me. I imagine, however, that both the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha have some rules or objects which would prevent our joining them. The Khilafat Committee is undoubtedly acting in a communal manner, even more so perhaps than the Muslim League, but it may be that it has no rules or objects whereunder political or economic rights are claimed for Muslims as such. About non-Brahmins, I cannot say anything without seeing the rules of their organisation. Probably they will be entitled to join us. So also the depressed classes. The claim of the latter and the non-Brahmins as well can hardly be considered a claim on behalf of religious groups. The question can only be decided after reference to the rules of the organisations.

3. To V. Chattopadhyaya¹

27 September 1928

My dear Chatto,²

I am in receipt of your two letters dated August 29th and September 5th. I have just returned from Calcutta where I went to preside over the All Bengal Students' Conference. This conference was very suc-

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, pp. 153-154, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. Brother of Sarojini Naidu; attended Stuttgart Congress of Socialist International 1907; formed Indian Independence Committee in Germany during First World War; attended 3rd Congress of Communist International in Moscow 1921 and thereafter was prominent in communist activities in Europe. From 1927 was joint secretary of the central office of the League against Imperialism; left Berlin for Moscow in 1932 and died sometime after 1937.

cessful and it has formed a strong association for the students of Bengal. I expect that before long there will be an all India association for students.

I am going away again today for a District Conference in Oudh³ and have not got much time. We are having famine conditions in the greater part of the U.P. and this makes it a little difficult to carry on any organising work in the rural areas.

Regarding the Secretaryship of the Congress you may have seen that I offered to resign⁴ but was asked to reconsider my decision. For the present I am continuing as Secretary but I do not know how long I can do so. I am afraid it is not possible for me to hold on at all costs to any office.⁵ I can only remain there so long as I feel that I am welcome.

The All India Congress Committee meets next month in Calcutta and much will depend on what this committee does. Meanwhile the Independence for India League has had a good reception although it is largely on paper still. The real danger to all such organisations is not from lack of support but from the wrong kind of people entering it and neutralising all its influence.

You are perfectly right in saying that the want of a newspaper is a great drawback for us. But newspapers cost money and I see no prospect of money anywhere. I would not like to run any newspaper or any organisation in India with the help of money raised outside India. A daily paper is utterly out of the question. The most that can be attempted at present is a weekly. Even that is difficult both from the point of view of money and men. * * *

You will notice that the Public Safety Bill in the Assembly was just defeated by the casting vote of the President and that the matter has now been postponed till the next session of the Assembly.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

3. Held at Lakhimpur-Kheri.

4. Jawaharlal had offered to resign because he felt that his work for the Independence for India League might conflict with Congress policy.

5. Chattopadhyaya in his letter of August 29th had written: "...It would be a serious political blunder if you resign your position as General Secretary of the Congress. The reactionaries among whom must, of course, be included Subhas Bose, will take advantage of the situation created by your retirement in order to make the Congress revert to its old position, abandon the Independence Resolution and sever the connection of the Congress with the League. That is one reason why you must at all cost hold on to the Secretaryship."

4. To Kshitish Chandra Dutta¹

Allahabad
4 October 1928

Dear Sir,¹

Your letter of the 30th. You are quite right in thinking that I do not agree with a great deal in the Nehru Committee report. Undoubtedly the Independence for India League has been started because of the All Parties decision in Lucknow. In fact I made this clear at Lucknow itself. Under the circumstances you are right in not joining this League.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 7/1928-29, p. 127, N.M.M.L.
2. A lawyer of Sylhet, now in Bangla Desh.

5. To N. S. Hardikar¹

October 8th, 1928

My dear Hardikar,

I have just sent a telegram² to you. I must say that you put me a very difficult question. It became doubly difficult for me as I did not have all the facts. I have sent you a reply but I am not at all satisfied with it. You know my own attitude to the Nehru Committee's report. I am prepared to be enthusiastic about its solution of the communal problem. I am also prepared to welcome many other things in it.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-8/1928, p. 91, N.M.M.L.
2. 'Difficult to advise without details. You might carry on propaganda for Nehru Report subject to independence. Please decide yourself.'

Some other things I do not welcome but for the sake of peace I am prepared to be silent. The fundamental issue of Dominion Status and independence however is one on which I must speak out my mind not because I love hearing my voice or seeing my name in print but because I do feel that the cry for Dominion Status will land us into very great difficulties. Looking at it even from the narrow point of view of supporting the Nehru Committee's report I should have said that it was a good thing if a party in the country stood for independence.

At the time of the Lucknow Conference I disliked very much the plunge into a Dominion Status Constitution. Ever since I have felt that the situation has definitely worsened in regard to this question.

I do not want to attack the Nehru Report if I can help it because it has succeeded in a very great measure in solving the communal problem and I am prepared to pay a large price for that. At the same time without attacking this report I do want to go on repeating that some of us stand for independence. I also want to see an organisation of these people grow up. That is why the Independence for India League was started.

That being the position what am I to advise you? If I had had full details of the kind of work that Lala Lajpat Rai wants you to do, I might perhaps have suggested something, but I do not know. It is therefore best that you should decide for yourself and act accordingly.

Your letter of October 2nd has just reached me. I am glad you have got into touch at last with the Calcutta Reception Committee. I did not refer to the Dal in my address at the Students' Conference because one has to keep some artistic unity in what one says and no occasion arose for me to refer to it. But I spoke to the volunteers about the Dal and warmly recommended their joining it.

I am going to Meerut in a few days for the Delhi Conference and then to Jhansi.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. Statement to the Press¹

There appears to be some misapprehension about the Independence for India League meetings which are going to be held in Delhi. As the convener of these meetings I should like to make the position clear. The Independence for India League, as is well known, was started at Lucknow at the time the All Parties Conference met there. Provisional rules were framed and some conditions of membership were laid down. Every one who subscribed to these rules and conditions could join the League. Subsequently independence leagues were started in other parts of the country. This was a welcome sign that the independence movement was strong and widespread in the country. It is not clear, however, what relation these provincial leagues bear to the organization started at Lucknow. Only those who have actually joined the latter and accepted its provisional rules and conditions of membership can be considered its members. It appears that many of the members of the provincial leagues have not done so. There are, for instance, definite clauses in our provisional rules excluding communalists from joining our league. I do not know if such clauses exist in the rules of other leagues.

I gather that other leagues have been formed with the object of affiliating themselves, at a later stage, with the organization started at Lucknow. They will be welcome if they do so. Some of such organisations apparently aim solely at getting the National Congress to adhere to the independence resolution and having succeeded in this purpose to disband. The organization, formed at Lucknow, aims at something more than this. It is a permanent organization, with a definite policy and programme. It will cooperate with pleasure with all other organizations which have objects in common with it, but its constitution can only be settled by its own members. Meetings of the Independence for India League formed at Lucknow, which are going to be held in Delhi, as has already been announced, are open to all members who have already joined it. Members of other independence leagues are welcome to attend those in an advisory capacity. Some such members have already been invited to do so. But only full members of the organization started at Lucknow, who have accepted its provisional rules and conditions, are entitled to determine the constitution and programme of the League.

1. 2 November 1928. *The Tribune*, 6 November 1928.

7. Circular on the Activities of the League¹

At general meetings of the members of the League held in Delhi on November 4th and 5th, 1928 the following elections were made and decisions arrived at :

1. OFFICE-BEARERS OF THE LEAGUE

President	:	S. Srinivasa Iyengar
Treasurer	:	Shiva Prasad Gupta
Secretaries	:	Subhas Chandra Bose Jawaharlal Nehru

2. PROVISIONAL ALL INDIA COUNCIL

1. Ganesh Shanker Vidyarthi	U.P.
2. Sri Prakasa	U.P.
3. Kiran Sankar Roy ²	Bengal
4. Harikumar Chakravarti ³	Bengal
5. B. Sambamurti	Andhra
6. T. Viswanathan ⁴	Andhra
7. S. Satyamurti ⁵	Tamil Nadu
8. Abdul Bari	Behar
9. Shankar Lal ⁶	Delhi

1. Issued at Allahabad, 8 November 1928. A.I.C.C. File No. 7/1928, pp. 117-125, N.M.M.L.
2. Member of the Anushilan party who later joined Das and the Swarajist party in Bengal; leader of the Bengal Congress party in 1939; leader of opposition in Bengal Assembly, 1946; Deputy Chief Minister, West Bengal, 1949; d. 1949.
3. One of the leaders of the Jugantar Party in Bengal; imprisoned in Mandalay jail; for some time Secretary, Bengal P.C.C.
4. b. 1895; advocate of Visakhapatnam who joined the noncooperation movement and served several terms of imprisonment; member Madras Assembly 1937-39 and 1946-53; Minister for Law in Andhra Pradesh 1953-54; Member Lok Sabha 1967-71.
5. (1889-1943); advocate, Madras High Court and leading Congressman of Tamil Nadu; served several terms of imprisonment in the noncooperation movement; Swarajist Member of the Madras Legislative Council from 1923 to 1930 and of the Central Assembly from 1935 till his death; secretary and then deputy leader of the Congress Party in the Central Assembly; a distinguished parliamentarian, well known for his oratory and quick repartee, especially during question hour in the Assembly.
6. (1885-1953); a Congressman and leading member after 1939 of the Forward Bloc in Delhi.

10. Arif Hasvi	Delhi
11. Jamnadas Mehta ⁷	Bombay
12. Kedar Nath Saigal ⁸	Punjab
13. Govindananda	Sind

The office-bearers were empowered to add one name each from Gujarat, Maharashtra, Central Provinces (Marathi) and Punjab after consultation with the local committees. They were also authorised to add four additional names preferably to represent such provinces as are not so far represented on the Provincial Council.

3. The following provincial organisers were appointed :

Kerala	S. K. Kombrambail
Karnataka	N. S. Hardikar

4. Resolved that articles 2, 3, 7, 8 and 9 of the constitution be printed on the application form for membership.

5. Resolved that the office of the provisional All India Council be situated at Allahabad in charge of Secretary, Jawaharlal Nehru, and that he be authorised to take necessary steps to organise it.

6. Resolved that fifty per cent of the membership subscriptions realised in provinces be sent immediately to the Treasurer of the All India Council, Shiva Prasad Gupta, Seva Upvan, Benares.

7. Resolved that membership certificates be issued by the provincial offices.

8. Resolved that the League do associate itself with the League against Imperialism.

9. Resolved that, as soon as funds permit, a weekly newspaper to carry on propaganda for the League be started, and a research department be established.

10. Resolved that a meeting of the Provisional All India Council be held in Calcutta before the sessions of the National Congress, and that the Council meeting should be followed by a general meeting of the members of the League also before the Congress sessions.

11. The meeting discussed the immediate programme of the League and was of opinion that the League should

(i) help in the organisation of the workers, peasants and professional classes; and

7. (1884-1955); a Congressman and railway trade union leader; representative of the Government of India with the Government of Burma, 1944-46.
8. (1896-1963); accused in the Lahore Conspiracy Case and the Meerut Conspiracy Case; one of the organisers of the demonstration against the Simon Commission at Lahore; imprisoned several times; publisher of *Bande Mataram*, Lajpat Rai's newspaper.

(ii) train workers to carry on the work of the League.

A committee consisting of the office-bearers and B. G. Horniman, S. Satyamurti, Dr. Datta,⁹ Kedar Nath Saigal and Jamnadas Mehta was appointed to draw up a programme for the League and to place it before the next meeting of the All India Council.

12. Resolved that a committee consisting of the office-bearers, Shanker Lal and Kedar Nath Saigal be appointed to report to the All India Council the names of communal organisations which have for their objects or as their declared policy the advocacy of political or economic rights based on membership of a religion, caste or sect, as for instance:

1. The Muslim League
2. The Hindu Mahasabha
3. The Sikh League
4. The South Indian Liberal Federation

Jawaharlal Nehru

9. Dr. Bhupendra Nath Datta (1880-1961); younger brother of Swami Vivekananda; associate of Sri Aurobindo Ghose; first editor of *Jugantar*, and convicted for sedition; later devoted himself to socialist propaganda.

8. Interview to the Press¹

I was very much surprised to read the other day that Dr. Besant had complained of the intolerable tyranny² of the Congress. I do not know what she referred to. There could not have been any complaint about the Congress not giving a patient hearing to every speaker. Dr. Besant perhaps does not approve of some of the decisions of the Congress or of the All India Congress Committee, but that surely does not mean

1. Interview given at Bettiah on 16 November 1928. *The Searchlight*, 21 November 1928.
2. In a press statement Mrs. Besant had said: "The Congress is becoming an intolerable tyranny by denial of free speech to the minority. The All Parties Conference is the only refuge of those who uphold free speech." Referring to the discussion at the A.I.C.C. in October 1928, she had said: "There was something unreal in declaring for independence and at the same time going to the British courts for justice and councils for legislation. Indians must make their lives consistent with their declared beliefs."

that the Congress is tyrannical. If Dr. Besant wants the majority of the Congress to bow down to the minority or to an individual, that surely would be some kind of tyranny and the tyranny of the minority or of an individual is worse than any other tyranny. I would naturally like the Congress to agree with those who think like me. If the Congress does not do so I have no right to call it a tyranny.

The Independence for India League represents the left wing element in the country and the Congress. While the Congress admits all groups, the League confines itself to certain left wing groups only. It is not a rival of the Congress, but it certainly desires to influence the Congress and to carry the Congress majority with it. The Congress today stands certainly for independence, but there are many elements in it which are continually pulling towards the right. I do not think there is the slightest chance of the Congress going back on its decision regarding independence, but even without going back there is always the danger of the position being undermined and so it is necessary to be vigilant. It is also necessary for those who clearly believe in independence to be a compact and disciplined body. This need the Independence for India League supplies. I hope it will draw into its ranks all the left wing elements in the country. The League has also as its object something besides national independence. This is the reconstruction of Indian society on a basis of social and economic equality. The Congress so far has not adopted this ideal but I have hope that it will approve of it. This is another reason that the League should have a separate existence.

The Congress is a great national organisation with tremendous prestige. It is at the same time, by reason of its very bigness, a somewhat unwieldy body for action. In moments of crisis it may come up to the mark and lead in action also; but ordinarily it is difficult to get it moving. The Independence for India League, being a disciplined and well-knit body and consisting of people who are more or less agreed about the aims and methods, will have no such difficulty in having a programme of action.

Those who want Dominion Status will be satisfied with even less than Dominion Status. The demand for Dominion Status is really a step in the wrong direction which, even if achieved, will not carry us very near our ultimate object. Dominion Status or independence, sanction of the people is the first essential requisite of it and so long as that is not created in the country, the discussion about Dominion Status will in essence be as much academic as that of independence. It is true that there was greater sanction in the country in 1920-21 than after the Madras Congress, without there being any talk about independence. But then there was no talk in the country about Dominion

Status either and when one was being loudly talked about, it is necessary to carry on propaganda in favour of the other also.

The All Parties Conference does not seem to be serious about creation of sanction. Let them begin work for its creation and I shall not speak a single word about independence and wholeheartedly work with them.

BOYCOTT OF
SIMON COMMISSION

1. Organization of the Boycott¹

You will notice that so far as propaganda and other action connected with the carrying out of the boycott of the Commission are concerned, the Working Committee is taking steps to act in concert and cooperation with other political organisations and will be meeting in Bombay on the 15th instant for this purpose and will confer with other parties and take further steps. In the meantime, I hope you will take action on the other parts of the Congress resolution immediately and do the needful.

In regard to the directions contained in the resolution relating to non-official members in the legislatures, namely, clauses (c), (d) and (e), you will notice that apart from the specific instructions as to what should be done by the non-official members of the legislatures for carrying out the boycott resolution, they are called upon not to attend meetings of the legislatures "except for the purpose of preventing their seats being declared vacant or for the purpose of making the boycott effective and successful or for the purpose of throwing out a ministry or of opposing any important measure, which, in the opinion of the Working Committee of the Congress, is detrimental to the interests of India."

I am enclosing herewith a memorandum dealing with what will have to be done by non-official members, particularly members of the Congress Party, in the several legislatures in pursuance of these clauses. I trust this will have your immediate attention.

MEMORANDUM

The Congress resolution on the boycott of the Statutory Commission, in so far as it relates to the legislature, "calls upon non-official members of the Indian legislatures and leaders of political parties and communities of India and all others not to give evidence before the commission nor cooperate with it in any manner public or private, nor attend or participate in any social functions given to them." It also calls upon the non-official members of the Indian Legislature "neither

1. Circular to all provincial Congress committees and Congress parties in the legislature issued by Jawaharlal on 7 January 1928. *The Tribune*, 10 January 1928.

to vote for nor serve on Select Committees that may be set up in connection with this commission; to throw out every other proposal, motion or demand for grant that may be moved in connection with the work of the commission and not to attend meetings of the legislatures except for the purpose of preventing their seats being declared vacant or for the purpose of making the boycott effective and successful or for the purpose of throwing out a ministry or of opposing any important measure which, in the opinion of the Working Committee of the Congress, is detrimental to the interests of India."

In order to carry out all the directions, express and implied, in these clauses, it has to be ascertained first what the dates are in January and February on which the several legislatures, central and provincial, will meet.

It has also to be ascertained, when motions for the appointment of a Select Committee in respect of the commission or for the making of grants or for the taking of any other action in connection with the Commission will be or are likely to be made in the several legislatures. So far as the Assembly is concerned, the provisional programme of the business of the Assembly, a summary of which has appeared in the press, shows that the Assembly meets on 1st February on which day official business will be transacted. On the 2nd February, the Viceroy addresses both the legislatures and no business will then be taken. The Assembly again meets on the 6th February and transacts official business for three days. Non-official business is to be taken on the 9th and so on till the last week of March. The Simon Commission is expected to arrive in Bombay on the 3rd February, and we may anticipate that they would be in Delhi on the 6th. It is not known what official business the Government will bring up on the 1st February or on the 6th, 7th and 8th; nor is it known on what date the official motion, if any, for a Select Committee on the Simon Commission will be put down.

It has also to be noted, that, in so far as permission to attend the legislatures for any purpose other than that of carrying out the boycott of the Statutory Commission is concerned, the resolution of the Congress contemplates only purposes involving the throwing out of important Government or non-Congress proposals which, in the opinion of the Working Committee of the Congress, are detrimental to the interests of India. It therefore rules out any proposal from the Congress Party itself whether by way of resolution, motion or otherwise which could be moved or is sought to be carried in any legislature including resolutions or motions dealing with the Statutory Commission itself. Non-official members and particularly Congress Party members can

attend only to throw out proposals of a general character or any involving the matter of the Statutory Commission itself.

In the next place, it follows that, when members of the Congress Party cannot attend the legislatures for the purpose of promoting or advancing any measure within the council but only for the purpose of throwing out injurious proposals of the kind pointed out above, they cannot either attend meetings of Select Committees or any other statutory or advisory committees on which they may now be serving.

The interpretation of the Congress resolutions relating to the council programme and the latitude and laxity which such interpretations permitted in the past seem to me to make it essential that, if the members of the legislatures, particularly of the Congress Party, sincerely desire to carry out the boycott of the Simon Commission in letter and in spirit in accordance with the Congress resolution, the action of the members of the party should be such as to be unambiguous and effective for the purpose intended, and I trust that no efforts will be made to whittle down the effect of the boycott by applications for exemptions² and permissions to attend for all manner of matters and subjects.

2. In fact, exemptions were sought and granted for certain matters.

2. Speech at Allahabad¹

When Sir Ali Imam himself finds it difficult to swallow the Simon Commission, you can imagine my feelings when I have to face such a proposition. I am glad that something has happened which places me on the same platform with Sir Ali Imam who, with many of his colleagues, has adopted methods of noncooperation. I and noncooperation have been old friends and I am greatly pleased to find that others are accepting this sovereign remedy for the various ills from which our country suffers. We should not only boycott the Simon Commission, but at the same time decide to boycott now and for ever the whole conception behind it, the whole conception that the British Parliament is there to give us what it wills and to keep away from us what it likes, and the whole conception that we are parts for ever and ever of the

1. 10 January 1928. *The Leader*, 12 January 1928. Extracts.

RESOLUTION OF THE CONFERENCE ON BOYCOTT

17 January 1928

Dear Sir,

I give below for your information and necessary action a resolution passed by the Boycott Conference which was held at the instance of the Working Committee in Benares on January 15th and which was attended by representatives of various parties. The resolution was unanimously passed and I trust that all parties will join in making it a success. The resolution was later formally adopted by the Working Committee.

The Boycott Conference was also of opinion that voters should be encouraged to write to their constituents in the Council of State, or Assembly or Legislative Council, asking them to boycott the Simon Commission in every way. Such an expression of the will of the electorate, if well organised, is bound to produce considerable effect. I trust that you will endeavour to have this done.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

This conference representing various political parties is unanimously of opinion that the Statutory Commission must be left severely alone by the people of India and in pursuance of this resolution, it appeals to the people :

1. to observe *hartal* all over India on February 3rd, the day the Statutory Commission lands at Bombay, the *hartal* to be observed from the morning till the time of the meetings referred to in clause 2.

2. to hold public meetings all over India on February 3rd at 4-30 p.m. At these meetings the following resolution to be placed for adoption :—

“This meeting of the citizens of—places on record its condemnation of the appointment of the Statutory Commission in utter disregard of Indian opinion and its firm resolve to have nothing to do with that commission in any form and at any stage of its work. It calls upon all the elected members of the Council of State, the Assembly and the Legislative Councils and in particular the representatives of this (town, province etc.) to do everything that lies in their power to oppose and prevent the formation of a committee of the legislature in connection with the said commission. This meeting places on record its opinion that the Constitution of India should be framed by Indians and strongly supports the proposal of a special convention to frame such a Constitution.”

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4. To the Editor, *Swarajya*¹

18 January 1928

Dear Sir,

I have the honour to send you with this letter a copy of the resolution passed by the Boycott Conference at Benares on January 15th. You have already given publicity to this resolution. May I however request you to give as much additional publicity as possible to the recommendations of this conference, specially the appeal for a *hartal* and a public meeting on Friday 3rd. If I may be permitted to suggest it, a daily reminder, displayed prominently in your paper, would carry the message far and would contribute greatly to the success of the demonstrations.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-58/1928, p. 201, N.M.M.L. The *Swarajya* was a Congress newspaper published in Madras.

5. Message to the Citizens of Allahabad¹

February 3rd, the day the Statutory Commission lands on the Indian soil, will not be a day of mourning but it should be treated as a day for rejoicing, for on that day will commence afresh in India our war for 'independence'. I appeal to the people to observe a complete *hartal* on that day and to assemble in large numbers in the evening at the Purushottam Das Park to record the resolutions framed by the All Parties Conference at Benares.

1. 19 January 1928. *The Leader*, 21 January 1928.

6. Statement to the Press¹

The lead given by the All Parties Conference at Benares has been taken up with enthusiasm and earnestness by the whole country and every city in India is organising itself for the boycott of the Simon Commission. I trust that every Congress Committee will fully cooperate with other organisations that are working for this boycott and will thus ensure complete success of the *hartal* and public demonstrations on Feb. 3. But the success of this *hartal* will only mean one step forward for us. The real struggle will follow and we cannot relax our efforts after a successful demonstration. We shall have to carry on this struggle continuously and intensively till we make the will of India prevail over the will of England. All manner of attempts are being made on behalf of the British Government and their supporters to weaken the boycott and to prepare the ground for some kind of cooperation and compromise. It is up to our people and organisation to stiffen up and make it absolutely clear that we will not compromise on the basis of any foreign intrusion or intervention. Our aim is a completely free India and we have nothing to expect on this basis.

Prime Minister Baldwin stated recently in the course of a reply to Mr. Ponsonby's² peace letter : 'Is it not our inalienable right to govern ourselves, to develop our liberty and our institutions in accordance with our national ideals not subject to foreign domination?' He referred to England but that right is the right of every nation. That is the inalienable right of India and the Simon Commission and all commissions of the kind emanating from England deny that fundamental right and can receive no quarter in India. We stand by that right and must see to it that no one, whether he is a foreigner or a countryman, is allowed to tamper with it and that we develop enough strength to enforce it.

1. New Delhi, 24 January 1928. *The Leader*, 26 January 1928.

2. Arthur, first Lord Ponsonby, Minister in the Labour Government 1924 and 1929-31, and specialist in foreign affairs. In the years when he was out of office, he campaigned against war and issued a regular 'peace letter'.

7. To Kamta Prasad Kakkar¹

Allahabad
25 January 1928

Dear Mr. Kamta Prasad²,

As you must be aware it has been decided by the All Parties Conference at Benares to observe a *hartal* and hold a meeting on February 3rd — the day of arrival of the Simon Commission. We are issuing a notice for this above the names of a large number of conveners including Malaviyaji, Chintamani³, Hirday Nath Kunzru, Beharilal⁴, Chairman of the District Board, and many others. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru will preside over the meeting. I should be glad to have your name also as a convener.

May I also suggest⁵ that the Municipal offices be closed on that day? The Calcutta Corporation will be closed. So also I think Bombay, Benares and some others.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-58/1928, p. 173, N.M.M.L.
2. Kamta Prasad Kakkar was, at this time, the Chairman of the Allahabad Municipal Board.
3. C. Y. Chintamani (1880—1941); an Andhra domiciled in the U.P.; editor of *The Leader* 1909-20 and chief editor, 1926-41; Minister of Education U.P. 1921-23; President of the National Liberal Federation 1920 and 1931.
4. A landlord of Allahabad.
5. The suggestion was accepted.

8. On the Observance of the Hartal¹

The response to the appeal for *hartal* on February 3 has been magnificent, and there is no doubt that the cities and towns of India will observe it fittingly. All classes are joining in making this great demonstration a

1. Statement issued to the press by Jawaharlal on 29 January 1928. *The Tribune*, 1 February 1928.

success. Merchants and shopkeepers have agreed willingly to observe a *hartal*. Corporations and municipalities have decided to do likewise. All who have understood the real significance of the Simon Commission are taking part in the *hartal* and public meetings. It may be, however, that some persons for various reasons do not desire to associate themselves with the demonstrations. They must be left perfectly free to do what they wish. The *hartal* is a voluntary demonstration of our resentment, and there is no place in it for any kind of constraint. The workers should approach merchants and others, and explain to them the reasons for *hartal* and persuade them by all friendly and peaceful means. If any person does not agree or is not willing to participate, he should be left to himself without any interference. The opening of a shop or two when hundreds are closed does not mar the success of the *hartal*. It only brings out into striking prominence the contrast and demonstrates that those who are opposed to the *hartal* are an insignificant minority.

9. To the Secretary, P.C.C. Maharashtra¹

2 February 1928

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your telegram² and have noted the instructions you have given to all your Congress committees regarding the sending of a telegram to Sir John Simon. I feel I am not justified on my own authority to issue instructions to other Congress committees in the matter. I have a recollection that the question was informally discussed in the Working Committee and there were two opinions on the subject. I am thus precluded from taking action such as you suggest. But you and other provincial committees are perfectly free to act in the manner they choose and I wish you all success in your campaign.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-58/1928, p. 143, N.M.M.L.

2. Secretary, Maharashtra P.C.C. telegraphed on 30 January 1928 that Maharashtra Provincial Executive Committee had decided to request all Congress Committees in Maharashtra to wire as follows — "Sir John Simon Delhi. Public Meeting in Maharashtra condemns Commission." He wanted Jawaharlal to recommend to Congress Committees throughout India to send similar telegrams.

10. On the Success of the Hartal in Allahabad¹

Dear Sir,—After the *hartal* and the great demonstrations we have witnessed today in Allahabad, will you permit me to offer on behalf of the organizers and on behalf of myself our grateful thanks to all who worked so hard and contributed so much to our joint success? The papers have contained some brief accounts of the official and semi-official and interested opposition we had to face. But none who was not in the thick of the fight can have any idea of the intrigues and the unfair pressure that was brought to bear on all who wanted to take part in the boycott and the *hartal*. In Katra an intensive campaign was carried on for days by a sub-inspector of police accompanied by two worthy honorary magistrates and threat of prosecutions and heavy fines were held out to the shopkeepers who wanted to close their shops. Many of these shopkeepers told us that they were made to sign a notice against *hartal* under duress and against their will. The value of this notice can be gauged by the fact that in spite of it most of its signatories closed their shops and did, in fact, observe the *hartal*. I do not know if the police and the magistrates propose to act up to their threats and punish these shopkeepers. If so I trust that there will be no lack of public support for those brave persons who dared to do their duty in spite of the threats held out to them.

In the city all manner of false rumours and misleading notices were continually being circulated. But the main opposition came from a group inspired from above and with plenty of financial resources at its disposal. It was directed chiefly against the Muslim shopkeepers, and every device—religious bigotry, communal feeling, grievances against the municipality and the like—was dragged in to mislead the unwary, and yet it had little effect and had finally to be supported by passionate personal appeals which it is always difficult for us Indians to resist. There was no question of principle, no open opposition but only insidious propaganda. No one dared to come to our numerous *mohalla* meetings to face us there and oppose us although we gave every opportunity for it.

Some success attended these efforts and many of the Muslim shopkeepers in Chowk kept their shops open. And yet we know that

1. Letter to the Editor, 3 February 1928. *The Leader*, 6 February 1928.

many of them wanted to close them but dared not do so. Many of even the Muslim shops were closed. Among the Hindus there was a complete *hartal* of all the major shops. Owing to the opposition every shopkeeper had to think for himself and decide for himself and was not merely giving a passive consent to a decree of outside authority. It was an active and thinking *hartal* and its amazing success was greater than any of us had anticipated. It had its fitting climax in the gallant processions that marched through the pouring rain from Bharadwaj and Moti Park and in the great meeting in the evening. The sudden change of venue for this meeting owing to the rains made it impossible for us to inform even a portion of the people who wanted to attend, but the big hall was crowded with an enthusiastic and exuberant audience.

We have succeeded. And our success is due entirely to the workers who laboured with extraordinary energy and devotion. I shall not thank my colleagues, Hindus and Muslims, of the city Congress committee. We have been colleagues and comrades for many years and I owe them too much for thanks. But I should like specially to express my deep indebtedness to some of the Muslim merchants and shopkeepers who carried on bravely despite all pressure and inducement — Messrs. Baha-uddin, Abdul Latif, Abdul Khaliq, Haib Ullah, Abdul Razzaq Khan and Habibur Rahman. To my young comrades, the students of the University, I can only say that their youth and spirit made our work a joy and the occasional trouble we had to face melted away before their energy and gaiety. Without any outside pressure or inducement they decided to take a full part in the national demonstration and almost in a body left the University for a day. Of the 1500 and odd students in the University I am told that about 95 per cent participated in the *hartal*, the 5 per cent belonging chiefly to one particular hostel. A number of other students not belonging to the University also joined the *hartal*.

It has been a great day for Allahabad, a precursor I trust of the greater days to come when the call for more effective action goes forth. We know now that this call will meet with a suitable response from our fellow citizens and specially from the spirited youth of the city of Allahabad.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. Speech at Allahabad¹

The extent of the feeling of indignation against the Commission should be judged from the *hartal* and not merely from the passing of the resolution. After the experience of the past several *hartals*, I am in a position to pronounce that I am completely satisfied with today's *hartal* for several reasons. On this occasion, numerous counter influences were at work against the demonstration. In Katra, I was told, a police officer, too well-known to be named, and two honorary magistrates have been exerting their influence on the shopkeepers. They circulated a paper and obtained several traders' signatures, the police officer threatening prosecution and the honorary magistrates threatening to fine if they refused to sign. When I with others went to the shopkeepers, I was told by the traders that their signatures were obtained on a blank paper under compulsion. In spite of all that, it was noticed that even shopkeepers, whose signatures were obtained for a manifesto issued against the *hartal*, had suspended business. In Chowk, too, I think forces against *hartal* were at work and leaflets were flooded daily.

All sorts of efforts were made to force the Muslims not to close their shops. It should not, therefore, be inferred that the Muslims were opposed to *hartal* if many shops were kept open today. Many of the workers were Muslims. The greatest pleasure which today's demonstration offered to me is that the University students observed *hartal* on their own initiative, without being influenced by anybody. My information is that only 5 per cent of the students went to the University and even those who were obliged to attend the classes were from a particular hostel.

In open meetings no one came forward to oppose the motions for *hartal*. The Muslims, on the other hand, held a meeting last night in a place where I could not have reached. Mr. Haidar Mehdi and other Muslims who were in favour of *hartal* however attended that meeting, but so long as they remained there nothing was discussed seriously about the boycott of the Commission. Mr. Haidar Mehdi and his party ultimately left the meeting after waiting for a couple of hours and it was when they had left that resolutions were passed against the *hartal*.

1. 3 February 1928. *The Leader*, 6 February 1928.

Today is the beginning of a real struggle. If work is to be pushed on, the people would have to take sufficient interest in the matter, so that the Commission should not only know the Indians' views but also the nature of their ultimate determination to achieve the end.

12. To Syed Mahmud¹

In train to Bombay
4 February 1928

My dear Mahmud,

Today is the first real opportunity I have had after many days to write personal letters. I have been trying to pit myself against the bigoted and reactionary group of Muslims in Allahabad and although I must confess that for the moment victory is theirs I think their foundations have been shaken. I am not going to leave them in peace. The Muslim leaders² in Allahabad, as you know, with very few exceptions, are a bad lot and I think it is about time that they were put in their proper place. If there had been any effective Muslim to help it would have made a great difference. But Khwaja is worse than useless. He will not do anything and his being in Allahabad and not doing anything is positively harmful. Tasadduk is helpful but he is not quite active enough. And so I a Hindu, though a nominal one, have to face the Maulanas and the like!

I am going to Bombay to meet father. From there we shall probably go to Delhi direct for a week.

Your letters are thoroughly dismal reading. Why should you put on a woe-begone expression and be always dissatisfied with yourself and the world? I think it is the effect of Urdu poetry. People brought up on such sickly and sentimental and soppy stuff are bound to become a decadent people. Get rid of this outlook. Become a little more

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Muslim leaders like Maulana Vilayat Hussain, Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan, Muhammed Hussain and Zahur Ahmad had been addressing meetings against the boycott of the Simon Commission.

aggressive and you will see that the world does offer something to live for and fight for!

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

13. Interview to the Press¹

I must say that the *hartal* was a far greater success than I had dared to anticipate. We had to contend against communal feelings, threats and all manner of pressure brought to bear upon us on behalf of official, semi-official and other interested parties. The result was that each person who participated in the *hartal* had to think about it and decided after some consideration whether he should participate or not. The *hartal* was, therefore, a result of conscious thought and not merely an automatic obedience to the behests of any organization. I welcome *hartal* as a sure sign of political consciousness among the masses. I welcome it specially because of the awakening amongst students in India. It is always well for a country if her youth is spirited and daring. The *hartal* has shown that youths of India are both spirited and daring.

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald is obviously in a temper and that is a sure sign that our boycott is having its effect. It is also a sign that Mr. MacDonald is beginning to feel that he is very much in the wrong. Those people only who begin to doubt their position get into a temper. So far as the plea of inferiority complex goes I have very little to say about it. It may be true that all people under alien domination necessarily suffer a little from the inferiority complex. But whether that is true or not, it is quite obvious that Mr. Ramsay MacDonald is suffering from a 'superiority complex' and cannot tolerate any opposition or criticism of his position. That complex is invariably found in the 'Jingoes' and imperialists and Mr. MacDonald appears to be indistinguishable from those classes. His speeches and actions daily resemble more and more those of the imperialist brand. Mr. MacDonald accuses us of both an inferiority complex and lack of self-respect. This seems to me somewhat contradictory. If we suffer from this complex,

1. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 7 February 1928.

it means that we are too tender regarding what we consider touches our self-respect and not that we are lacking in it. His idea of Indian self-respect apparently is that we should obey implicitly the commands issued from Westminster or from the worthy leaders of the Labour Party. But that is not our notion of self-respect and no amount of bullying from Mr. Ramsay MacDonald or from anybody for the matter of that will convince us to the contrary. We shall unite and see who is in the right and whose policy succeeds.

14. On the Hartal in Allahabad¹

Sir,— I am enclosing for favour of publication copies of two letters² I addressed to Mr. Zahur Ahmad of Allahabad. Neither of these letters elicited a response from Mr. Zahur Ahmad. Five days ago I sent a third letter³ to him and informed him that in case I did not hear from him I would send these letters to the press. He has not taken the trouble to reply nor has he even done me the courtesy of an acknowledgment. In view of the charges that he has made against those who worked for the *hartal* in Allahabad, and which he has not considered it necessary to substantiate or justify in any way whatever, I would beg of you to give publicity to these letters.

Jawaharlal Nehru

I

Allahabad
Feb. 8

Dear Zahur Ahmad,— On my way back from Bombay yesterday I read your letter in the *Pioneer* of the 6th regarding the *hartal* in Allahabad. The following sentences occur in this letter :—

1. Letter to the Editor, 27 February 1928. *The Leader*, 2 March 1928.
2. These two letters were published in *The Leader*, 2 March 1928.
3. A.I.C.C. File No. G-58/1928, p. 3, N.M.M.L.

'All kinds of methods were used for this purpose. The vegetable sellers were exposed to severe threats by enthusiastic boycotters. Attempts were made to intimidate the shopkeepers and other persons engaged in trade'.

I presume you are aware that I took perhaps the most active part in organizing the boycott and *hartal* in Allahabad, and that I addressed a large number of public meetings in various parts of the city on the subject. As I am not aware of any undesirable practices on behalf of my colleagues or myself I shall be obliged to you if you will kindly supply me with some details of the charges you have made against the 'enthusiastic boycotters'. At the numerous meetings that I addressed I laid stress not only on the fact that the *hartal* must be voluntary but no shopkeeper who was not convinced by our arguments should close his shop. So far as the vegetable sellers were concerned I appealed to them specially the day previous to the *hartal* not to be influenced by any personal considerations they may have for any of us but to keep their stalls open unless they agreed with my argument and way of thinking. I was not fortunate enough to see you or, indeed, any other opponent of the *hartal* at these meetings and all I could do was to offer the fullest opportunity to any person who had doubts to speak or to ask questions. It was my intention to attend the meeting held on the night of Feb. 2 at Maulana Vilayat Husain's house, but I was informed that it was a semi-private gathering and that in any event a non-Muslim would not be welcome.

I shall be glad, therefore, if you will send me full particulars of the charges in your letter to the *Pioneer* and also to specify what the 'campaign of vilification and abuse' mentioned in your letter was and against whom it was directed.

You have often told me and many others in the past that you are no believer in principles in politics. That is your undoubted right, but unhappily I have a different standard and I do believe in and try to act up to some principles which I consider vital. Hence my request to you to enlighten me further in regard to your statements.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

II

New Delhi
15 February 1928

Dear Zahur Ahmad,

I wrote to you on the 8th February regarding the communication you had addressed to the *Pioneer* and requested you to enlighten me about some statements made therein. I have had no answer from you to this letter. I shall be glad if you will kindly send me an early reply. Please address it to Anand Bhawan, Allahabad.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

III

23/2/28

Dear Zahur Ahmad,

I have written to you twice already, once on the 8th February and a second time from New Delhi a week later, without eliciting any response. After having made serious charges of intimidation and undue pressure against those who worked for a *hartal* on February 3rd I think it was up to you to substantiate them or at any rate indicate what they were based on. I trust you will still do so. I shall wait for your reply till day after tomorrow. After that I propose to send copies of my letters to the press.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

15. Statement to the Press¹

The *Pioneer* of March 31 published a message from its Bombay correspondent to the effect that Mr. Gandhi may proceed to England as

1. *The Leader*, 4 April 1928.

the head of a deputation to Lord Birkenhead to find some way out of the present political impasse resulting from the boycott of the Simon Commission. The idea was on the face of it fantastic and no one who knew Mr. Gandhi or Pandit Motilal Nehru could imagine that there could be any truth in it. Nor am I aware of the slightest ground for believing that any responsible quarter has ever entertained it. To make absolutely sure, however, I communicated with Mr. Gandhi and I have his authority for contradicting it and stating that there is absolutely no truth in it.

Jawaharlal Nehru

16. To Atul Krishna Ghose¹

9 June 1928

Dear Sir,²

I thank you for your letter of the 29th May as well as your pamphlet on the boycott. I have read the latter. You ask me for my views on your little book. I am afraid I cannot give full expression to my views without writing a book myself. I feel also that there is such very great difference in our viewpoints that it will not be easy to find common ground. A discussion or an argument to be profitable must be based on certain admitted premises. But I find that even those will be lacking between you and me. I do not think therefore that it will be worthwhile my endeavouring to write at length to you.

I would only point out to you that it is not an amusing thing for most of us to leave our sheltered nooks of society, upset our domestic lives, and generally face uncertainty and insecurity for the mere fun of it. Nobody likes these things and if people are prepared to face them it is because they are actuated by an intense conviction. It is of course possible that that conviction may be a wrong one and due to ignorance but ordinarily one gives credit for bonafides.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40 (ii)/1928, pp. 139-40, N.M.M.L.

2. Ghose, a lawyer of Alipur, had sent to Jawaharlal his pamphlet "*A Dream and a Bluff*", in which he had termed the boycott of the Commission suicidal folly. He thought Jawaharlal "would improve if he had more experience of the village life of India."

And even wisdom is not a monopoly of any individual or group. As you know I am a fairly aggressive opponent of British rule in India. It may perhaps interest you to know that I have spent the most impressionable years of my life in England at school and college and I have a number of good English friends. I have also had occasion to read much and to travel much and have met the peoples of many countries so that I have had some opportunities to arrive at a correct conclusion which are usually denied to many of my countrymen.

You say in your letter that you have been good enough to change your opinion about me after reading two of my speeches. It may be that a personal interview may result in still further change. Similarly it may be that if you meet many of the persons you have criticised you may find out that they are neither so foolish nor unpractical nor self-seeking as you might otherwise think. Most of us I suppose are compounds of good and evil.

You have called the boycott of the Simon Commission a dream and a bluff and have criticised those who have advocated it. Do you think that any movement which is so widespread can possibly be a bluff or can be based on anything but conviction? You have compared the case of Egypt and Ireland. I am sorry I cannot go deeply into this question but allow me to assure you that your comparisons and the conclusions you draw have little basis in fact. And I say so from a fair knowledge of both the questions and of Irishmen and Egyptians. You will find if you go to other countries that there is not much to choose between them and India in regard to strength and weaknesses. They have all their weaknesses. Some may have more than others. It is my conviction with which many Egyptians are in agreement that India is politically more advanced than Egypt and is likely to attain her freedom sooner than Egypt.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

17. To Fenner Brockway¹

11 June 1928

My dear Fenner,

Thank you for your letter of the 11th May. I am glad to find that you have resumed the editorship of the *New Leader*. I hope this means that you are well on the way to health.

It is obvious that Simon & Co., are very desirous of dividing the Indian parties and that they are quite prepared to make various concessions. But I cannot conceive of any concessions which can go anywhere near acceptance by the Congress. You must have read about the *Pioneer* scheme for 'bridging the gulf'. I am almost sure that this is officially inspired and if there was any chance of its acceptance by the Indian parties the Government would put it forward itself.

I am rather worried on account of my wife's health. She appears to have had a relapse and her lungs are giving trouble again.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F-28/1928, p. 1, N.M.M.L.

18. Interview to the Press¹

I am not surprised at what happened at Lahore². It was but to be expected. I am glad Lahore has done well and I hope Lucknow would do better.

1. 2 November 1928. *The Tribune*, 4 November 1928.

2. The lathi-charge on 30 October 1928, when Lajpat Rai was severely beaten. He died on 17 November.

19. To the Editor, *Sarhad*¹

10th November 1928

Dear Sir,

I have your letter of the 1st November. I am very glad to know that you are issuing a Boycott Number of your weekly. The North West Frontier Province, owing to its strategical position, has been made into a stronghold of British imperialism. I am not surprised that reaction flourishes there. In the interests of British imperialism the province has been denied even the petty reforms which were granted to the rest of India. If there is any part of India which has suffered more than any other under British rule it is the Frontier Province. It is therefore up to that province to boycott the Simon Commission even more than the other provinces have done. That is not only a question of honour but good politics, for the more pressure you can exercise by your boycott the more you will impress upon both the Commission and the British Government that you can be trifled with no longer and that your demands must be acceded to.

It is well known that vast military preparations are being made by the British Government for a possible war in the near future. The burden of that war will necessarily fall chiefly on the people of the Frontier. It is for them to decide if they are going to permit themselves to be exploited for the benefit of British imperialism. If they are not so prepared then the only thing they can do is to boycott the Simon Commission and to join hands with all the progressive elements in India to free our country once for all from all foreign domination. When India is free there will be no question of reforms for this or that part of the country. Every person and every province will be a sharer in that freedom.

Wishing you all success,

I am
Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-73/1928, p. 7, N.M.M.L.

The *Sarhad* was an Urdu weekly published in Peshawar.

20. To Mohanlal Saxena¹

14 November 1928

My dear Mohanlal,

I told you in the train coming from Delhi that it would be difficult for me to draft any kind of an appeal for your boycott demonstrations in Lucknow. The more I think of it the less I feel like doing it. The real difficulty is that I do not know what you propose to do, how far you are prepared to go and what your material is like. It is no good shouting and doing nothing. Therefore the draft of this notice must be left to you.

I have not yet received any intimation that the provincial Congress committee will be held on the 25th November. Our P.C.C. office certainly deserves a gold medal for its thorough inefficiency. I have still hopes that the meeting will be held on that day. If so I shall reach Lucknow by the early morning train on the 25th. I would suggest your having public meetings on the 25th evening as well as the 26th, 27th and 28th. If you like you may leave out the 25th because we shall be busy with our committee meeting. I shall only stay on till the 28th if there is much doing. Otherwise I do not propose to waste good time in waving a little flag.

The A.I.C.C. at Delhi has definitely laid down that there should be *hartals* in places visited by Simon. There is no choice left. I hope therefore that you are organising such an *hartal*. Your Rajas and Nawabs will probably object to it as being against Hindu *Sabhyata* and the like and I am very much afraid that they will impress their will upon you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-73/1928, p. 5, N.M.M.L.

21. Tribute to Lala Lajpat Rai¹

I agree with Babu Krishnaballav Sahay² that Lala Lajpat Rai was not an individual but an institution and a public meeting is not the place where one can make an adequately correct estimate of his great personality. The present year is particularly unfortunate for India. The year opened under the shadow of the death of Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan. And now has come the death of another ex-president of the Congress. What is the moral to be drawn from the deaths of these personalities? The moral is that there is no dearth of great men in India. India has produced a larger number of great men in every sphere of life than possibly any other country in the world. Why is it that even in spite of that the country is not progressing at the rate the other countries are doing? To me it appears that the reason is that great men there are in the country, but a requisite number of followers is not forthcoming. That is also the reason for the untimely deaths of most of our leaders. All the leaders of India are more or less in bad health, because the strain of work generally falls too heavily on them, strain both mental and physical. Sacrifice also is not wanting in India. Every year conspiracies are unearthed in some part or other of India and every year people are found embracing death smilingly at the gallows. And yet Swaraj is not in sight; and why? Because in India, people know how to die but not how to live and die inch by inch for the sake of the country. Lala Lajpat Rai was an embodiment of that ideal, the ideal that MacSwiney³ described by saying that "It is a great thing to die for a cause, but it is a greater thing still to live for it". Indian people should learn this lesson from the life and death of Lala Lajpat Rai.

1. *The Searchlight*, 21 November 1928.

2. B. 1898; Minister for Revenue and Excise, Bihar Government, 1946-57; Chief Minister, Bihar, 1963-66.

3. Terence MacSwiney, Mayor of Cork in Ireland died of a long hunger strike in a British prison in October 1920.

22. They Have Dared!¹

It is announced in the public press that the Lucknow University authorities have invited Sir John Simon and his undistinguished crew to the University convocation. I do not know who these authorities are, but every school boy knows that India has resented the appointment and the coming of the Simon Commission and has boycotted it. Has no whisper of this reached the academic ears of the Lucknow University authorities? Have they not heard or felt in their *boudoirs* the deep rumble of a nation in anger? Do they not know how one of the greatest of India's sons was treated in Lahore city less than a month ago because he would not bow his head to this commission which the authorities of Lucknow University have invited? What was his greatness worth or the love that millions of his countrymen bore him before the baton of an insolent policeman? Only a few days ago his great and generous heart pulsed with life and the warm blood throbbed through his veins, and with untiring energy his rich mind worked for the emancipation of his country and all who were oppressed in it. And then, his body lay cold and stiff and the valiant spirit that had inhabited it for four and sixty years had gone. Today that body is dust and ashes. We are told by his doctors that his death was hastened by the blows received by him when he led his fellow citizens to protest against the Simon Commission. And yet the authorities of Lucknow have invited this Commission to their convocation! And yet, they have dared!

Young men and women of Lucknow, what say you to this infamous and insolent challenge? Is the honour of your country nought that it can be kicked in the dust by a policeman clad in the livery of our alien rulers? But the poor policeman was but an instrument in other hands. What of your University authorities who of their own free will dare to honour those whom the nation has repudiated and boycotted? What of them and their attempt to exploit your University for the glorification of the Simon Commission? This is the measure of their nationalism, of their love of India and her honour. This is

1. Message to the students of Lucknow, November 1928. A.I.C.C. File No. G-73/1928, p. 3, N.M.M.L.

the tribute they pay to the memory of Lajpat Rai. Will you too forget soon this fragrant memory and this shining example?

They have dared! What dare you? Will you not make it clear to your University authorities, to the Simon Commission, and to all whom it may concern, that the young men and young women of Lucknow cherish the memory of their departed leader and stand for the cause for which he lived and died? That they stand for the boycott of the Simon Commission and will not permit anyone to exploit them on behalf of the enemies of Indian freedom. Will you not take full part in the boycott demonstrations in Lucknow, and, above all, boycott the convocation to which your University authorities have invited the Simon Commission?

They have dared! Do you also dare?

Jawaharlal Nehru

23. To Mohanlal Saxena¹

1 December 1928

My dear Mohanlal,

I understand that you propose to have a number of kites² flying with black flags etc. on December 5th when the party is held in Kaiserbagh. This is a very good idea and I hope you will persevere with it. You might also have a few large kites or *tukkals* with big streamers of flags.

There is another suggestion that I might make. You might write formally as Secretary of the Boycott Committee to all the talukdars participating in the party or at any rate you will send your letter to the Executive Committee of the British Indian Association³ and other important persons. You can tell them that their action in giving a party is strongly resented by the public of Lucknow and is considered to be most unnational and dishonourable.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-73/1928, p. 1, N.M.M.L.

2. When a garden party was given by some taluqdars to the Simon Commission in the Kaiserbagh at Lucknow, no one who was suspected of being a boycotter was allowed by the police to approach even the roads near the Bagh. The result was the descent from the skies of numerous black kites and balloons bearing such legends as "Simon Go Back" and "India for Indians".

3. An association formed by the taluqdars of Oudh in 1861.

24. Statement to the Press¹

Lucknow experienced the full might of the British Empire this morning when a hundred mounted and foot police charged a crowd of 30 thousand or more across the country for two or three furlongs. Hundreds were beaten with *lathis*, some were injured seriously and the life of one is in danger. Many were beaten down and horses passed over them.

The trouble arose when the procession carrying black flags which started this morning reached the *maidan* opposite the railway station. They were asked to enter the space which was allotted to them a quarter of a mile removed from the place where the commission was going to pass. Objection was taken to this as it was considered futile to demonstrate from such a distance.

There was plenty of land on the left and enough to accommodate lakhs which was not allotted to anybody. The procession stopped along the road in an orderly manner, a small part of it facing the open space on the left. In front of the latter were some mounted police. The leaders of the procession said they were prepared to remain at a distance away from the road but were not prepared to go a quarter of a mile away. Thus the procession remained on the road a little to the left of it.

Many people also gathered near the route of the commission, and individuals gradually dribbled from the road where the procession was standing to the other group near the route, but the main procession headed by myself, Pt. Pant² and other Congress leaders of Lucknow stood where it was.

1. Issued at Lucknow, 30 November 1928. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 1 December 1928.
2. Govind Ballabh Pant (1887-1961); educated at Almora and Allahabad; advocate of the Allahabad High Court; leader, Swaraj Party in U.P. Council, 1923-30; severely beaten along with Jawaharlal at Lucknow in the Simon Commission demonstration 1928 and received injuries from which he never fully recovered; suffered many terms of imprisonment; Premier, U.P. 1937-39 and Chief Minister, 1946-55; Home Minister, Government of India, 1955-61.

Suddenly it was noticed that the group, a quarter of a mile away across the big *maidan*, standing near the route, was driven back by mounted police who beat them mercilessly. Galloping horses pursued the individuals and knocked them down. Meanwhile the procession stood like a solid phalanx on the road near it.

The mounted police forced the main procession but the procession solidly stood its ground. There was a fierce attack by the mounted as well as the foot police. As the attack proceeded the processionists reached to the other side of the road, the police followed beating them and throwing stones at them.

Having reached the plot originally offered to them the police pushed the crowd about a further 200 yards and stone-throwing by the police and for some minutes also from the crowd ensued. The latter were immediately stopped by the leaders of the boycotters. In spite of this fierce charge the procession did not break into a rabble.

When the Simon party passed a little later there were tremendous shouts all along of "Simon go back", "shame". The procession marched back to the city in an orderly manner, and after a brief speech from me at the Aminuddaulah Park they dispersed. Almost everyone of the prominent leaders was injured. After receiving two or three *lathi* blows I was surrounded by students who insisted on receiving the blows to protect me. Some of these brave young men were badly hurt in their efforts to protect me, Pt. Pant and Mrs. Mitra.³

Apart from the legality of the question, the manner the police charged was extremely brutal. The police were there when the crowd went there and they could have been stopped then. They were suddenly pounced upon by the police and given *lathi* blows on all parts of the body. It was scandalous. The Deputy Commissioner⁴ himself got excited and started collaring people. The police officials seemed to have a blood-lust from the way they went about and pounced upon unarmed people. They are openly boasting, it is said, of the great beating they have given to the boycotters. Lucknow, specially the young men and students, distinguished themselves by their discipline and courage and Lucknow has reason to be proud of the events of this morning, and officials who were responsible for this morning's events have helped greatly in producing an atmosphere in India which will put an end to the British rule.

The local government issued a communique regarding the events of the 28th evening. It is understood they are issuing another regarding last night's and today's happenings.

3. Shrimati Suniti Devi Mitra, an active Congress worker of Lucknow.

4. C. W. Gwynne, I.C.S., at this time Deputy Commissioner, Lucknow and later Chief Secretary, U.P. Government.

25. Telegrams to R. Bridgeman and G.S. Dara¹

3-12-28

Thanks. Injuries severe but not serious.
Hope survive British Empire.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(i)/1928, p. 463, N.M.M.L.

Gurdit Singh Dara was associated with the London branch of the Indian National Congress and was editor of *India*, a journal published in London.

26. Statement to the Press¹

A number of statements have been issued regarding the recent happenings in Lucknow. It may interest people to have a connected account of these incidents from one who was an eye witness to many things that happened there.

It appears that the authorities were assured by their underlings and informers that the boycott demonstrations in Lucknow would not amount to much. They were told that Muslims would not take any prominent part and a slight difference of opinion in the Boycott Committee was magnified and made to appear as if there had been a split among the boycotters. The original attitude of the authorities was thoroughly accommodating. As soon as news of the so-called split reached them they stiffened their attitude. But very soon they found that there was no split and the Boycott Committee was as determined

1. Issued at Allahabad, 1 December 1928. *The Leader*, 3 December 1928.

and united as ever. Immediately the authorities became more accommodating and agreed to the procession on the 26th. So far as the Boycott Committee were concerned they made it clear that they were prepared to abide by all reasonable arrangements made by the police. It was not their intention to seek a conflict with the police. Their sole object was to organise a great demonstration against the Simon Commission.

The procession of the 26th November was an eye-opener to the authorities. It was a vast procession whose numbers it is impossible to guess. It proved conclusively the tremendous strength of feeling against the Simon Commission and the Government that was backing this Commission. Nothing untoward happened during this procession in spite of the vast numbers that took part in it because the police did nothing aggressive. The procession, however, made it clear to the authorities that their informants who had told them that there was not going to be much boycott agitation were hopelessly in the wrong. Immediately there appears to have been a change in the attitude of the officials and they seemed to have decided to try a little bit of terrorism to cow down the people.

The first fruit of this change of attitude became visible on the 28th, when another procession was to have been taken out from the Congress office. Notice of this procession and the route it was going to take was sent to the police authorities. On the very evening of the procession, however, the police informed the Boycott Committee that they would not permit that route. The secretary of the Committee told the police that it was too late for them to change their plans. The procession therefore gathered under the Congress office. The city magistrate, Mr. Ainuddin, with mounted police, came there and spoke to Babu Mohanlal Saxena, secretary of the Committee. They went into an adjoining shop and exchanged written notes which have been published.

The procession formed up. It was faced by the mounted police. The procession had hardly proceeded a step or two when they were attacked by the mounted police and batons were used freely. It is untrue to say, as has been said in the Government communique, that the procession tried to force their way through the police. Their idea was to assert their right to proceed and to stop if the police actually stopped them. They had in fact stopped when the charge was made. It is stated in the Government communique that people tried to get round the police by climbing over the railings of the park. This is untrue. Many people did try to climb over the railings, but this was when the police charge was made and they wanted to escape. It must

be remembered that, apart from the processionists, there were many other people there and it was largely these people who tried to escape the charge. The police, however pursued them on the pavements to the railings and beat them there. The marks of the hoofs of the police horses were plainly visible the next day on the pavements. Many people on the side of the processionists were injured. Among them were Messrs. Mohanlal Saxena, Pestonji² and Kishan Prasad Kaul³ of the Servants of India Society.

It is stated by the Government that stones were thrown by the processionists on the police and some police officers were injured. It is impossible for anyone to say whether stones were thrown or not, but it was pointed out at the time to the deputy commissioner, Mr. Gwynne, that if the processionists had wanted to throw stones there were piles of them on the roadside. Mr. Gwynne was also asked if he would show to any responsible members of the Boycott Committee the injuries which were alleged to have been caused to the police by stone throwing, but none was forthcoming. Mr. Gwynne stated ultimately that no obvious injuries were caused. Anyway, in spite of repeated requests, none was shown.

In the night I received a telephone message from Lucknow about the police assault and I left for Lucknow the next day. I found on arrival that there was very great resentment at the police assault of the day before and the general feeling was that the Boycott Committee should have no further official dealings with the police authorities. There was no procession on behalf of the committee that day, that is, Nov. 29, but a mass meeting had been called to celebrate Lajpat Rai Day. A *mohalla* meeting had been called at Narhi at the back of Hazratganj. I went to this small meeting with Mr. Khaliq-uz-zaman, Mr. Harkaran Nath Misra, and Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant. After the meeting was over, it was proposed to go in a body to the big meeting in Aminuddaula Park. I suggested that we should not all go in a procession as there were a number of small boys present and it might not have been easy to have an orderly procession. Our suggestion was that two or three small groups not exceeding twelve should go and the rest should go individually. We further suggested that in order to avoid any blocking of traffic or any conflict with the police we should not go through Hazratganj, which is the main European shopping quarter,

2. Kuverji Peston, a Congressman of Lucknow.

3. Secretary, Oudh Liberal Association for several years; edited Urdu weekly *Hindustan*; President, *Anjuman Taraqqi-i-Hind* in 1930; died in 1955.

but should proceed by unfrequented roads. In the course of these discussions the assistant superintendent of police came up to me and wanted to know what we were going to do and if we proposed taking out a procession. I told him that in view of the wanton attack of the police the day before we were not prepared to have any further dealings with them. A little later we formed up three groups of twelve each. Two of these groups remained standing whilst one headed by Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant and myself proceeded along Newal Kishore Road. We had barely started when we were stopped by the mounted police and a charge was made on this group of twelve. The road was practically empty at the time except for us and the mounted police. The members of our group received plenty of *lathi* blows. After a few minutes the *lathi* blows ceased and the Deputy Commissioner appeared on the scene.

It is curious that both on the evening of Nov. 28 and on Nov. 29, when the police made an assault and used their batons, the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Gwynne, appeared on the scene like a *deus ex machina* immediately after the occurrence. It would almost appear that on both occasions he was waiting in the neighbourhood for the assault to be over in order to put in his appearance.

We had a long argument with the Deputy Commissioner. He said that he had no objection to our proceeding in the manner we intended to do but we must have a formal permission for it. We told him after the police behaviour on two occasions we were not prepared to ask for any formal permission. Thereupon he suggested that he would be satisfied by an oral request, but that too we were not prepared to make. Ultimately he even said that he was prepared to treat our conversation as an oral request if we were also prepared to treat it as such. We were unable, however, to agree to this even.

It thus became entirely a matter of prestige on either side. We sat down by the roadside with the mounted police barring our way. Meanwhile news of these happenings spread far and wide and had created a great deal of consternation at the mass meeting that was going on in Aminuddaula Park. There was a tendency for the audience to come in a body to us. This was stopped and the meeting sent a deputation to make enquiries and report. Great crowds began to assemble on the Hazratganj side of the Newal Kishore Road. Ultimately, after an hour's waiting, the Deputy Commissioner said he would permit our group to proceed along the route we had originally decided upon. Whether this was due to the increasing crowds or the triumph of reason I do not know. His decision was evidently not to the taste of the Superintendent of Police, who did not like the idea of official prestige going

down before the prestige of a group of twelve men. However, our groups were allowed to proceed. We told the great crowd that had assembled to go back to the meeting by other roads, which they did. Our three groups marched, preceded by the mounted police as a kind of guard of honour, along Hazratganj and Kaiserbagh to the park. The incident of the evening had naturally attracted a great deal of attention and our little procession which might otherwise have been unnoticed became a kind of triumphal march. The meeting itself in the park was an enormous gathering and very great enthusiasm prevailed in it.

The secretary of the Boycott Committee had asked the police previously for a block of land along the route to be taken by the Simon Commission from the station for our demonstration. The Deputy Commissioner had replied on the 29th that he would have no objection to giving this plot, but he had already allotted it to the depressed classes. Late at night on the 29th some of us went to see the lands lying round about the station. We saw that the so-called depressed classes numbering about 30 or 40 were occupying two little *shamianas* at a great distance from the station and there was enough land along the road and in front of the station to accommodate five or six lakhs of people. No question could possibly arise of our taking any land which had been allotted to the depressed classes. We visited those people and found that they had been asked to come there to witness dancing and singing by professional singers who had been brought from Cawnpore. This is locally known as *Nautanki*⁴ performance. We were told that each person who had come had been given Rs. 2. They were also provided with *ganja* and *charas*. We talked to some of these people. They knew little about the Simon Commission and those who did know something about it said that they were prepared to wave black flags, etc., when it passed by.

It was clear from the vacant land available that if the Deputy Commissioner was sincere in his offer to give us a good site there was no lack of space. It was the easiest thing possible for him to separate us by a hundred yards or so from the depressed classes and if necessary to put policemen between us. Even apart from the line of the route there was an adjoining *maidan* which, though not very suitable for us, was far better than the plot of land at a distance that he had allotted.

4. Popular folk dances of Uttar Pradesh. The themes are taken either from religious legend and history or from current events and problems.



FAMILY GROUP



The next morning the procession started from the Congress office at 6 with black flags, etc. The procession was well organised and marched in fours, with ropes on either side to keep the lines. Behind the regular procession of a thousand or more, followed large numbers of other processionists in no very regular array. It was a vast crowd on the march. Smaller processions went directly from various *mohallas* to the station. When the main procession arrived near the open space opposite the station it turned to the left to go towards the line of the route. They were stopped by the police and were asked to go to the right. The plot in the right was at least a quarter of a mile away from the nearest point of the Simon Commission's route. We pointed out that it was ridiculous for us to congregate at this distance. As, however, we were not allowed to proceed to the left we remained standing there. Part of the procession was allowed to march a little further ahead along the route but was then stopped by the police. Here we stood for an hour or more. Many of the smaller processions and individuals gradually dribbled to the other side of the *maidan* near the line of route. I had a short conversation with the Deputy Commissioner and pointed out to him that his allotment was grossly unfair and there was plenty of vacant land available for us in a better position. He told me gruffly, however, that he was not prepared to argue and that his orders must be carried out. A day before the police assault he had appeared in the guise of a sweetly reasonable person. On the 30th morning there was little of sweetness or reasonableness about him. Evidently he had felt annoyed at the downfall of official prestige the night before and wanted to reinstate it by aggressive and offensive behaviour. So we stood for a long time, the main procession in serried ranks on the road, with a small part of it facing the left, and the crowd near the line of route and some individuals spread out over the *maidan* to the left. It is difficult to estimate the numbers present. Opinions vary greatly. Some people estimate the entire crowd at a lakh of persons. Others give a much smaller figure. I do not think there could have been less than 50,000 people in the various open spaces in front of the station.

Suddenly we saw a charge by the mounted police at the other end of the *maidan*. We were told subsequently they had given five minutes' notice to the party but had as a matter of fact charged within a couple of minutes. The *maidan* was full of little groups of people. These were driven down ruthlessly by the mounted police and beaten with *lathis*. Many people fell down and were driven over by horses. The *maidan* has an enormous space and the mounted police had a fine chance of charging at a gallop, which they took full advantage of.

All this we saw from a distance of nearly a quarter of a mile—a distance which rapidly decreased because the drive was in our direction. Ultimately the mounted police reached the procession. The processionists stood firm and for a little while refused to budge. Even the horses were brought to a standstill by the solid phalanx of the procession. The aid of the foot police was then taken and the mounted and the foot police charged with batons at the procession. Quite a prominent part in the attack with *lathi* blows was taken by the Assistant Superintendent of Police.

The procession, however, did not break up in spite of this but gradually receded step by step maintaining a fair measure of order. Having crossed the road we came to the plot which had actually been allotted to us. The police charge, however, continued for another hundred yards or more. The police then stopped the charge and took to throwing stones—a pastime in which some of the police officers on foot vigorously indulged. This was a bit too much for the nerves of the procession and they began to retaliate in kind. A number of stones were thus thrown by people on the side of the processionists, but immediately they were asked to desist and stone-throwing stopped on the side of the processionists.

The procession lined up again and stood facing the mounted and the foot police in battle array three or four deep, with a distance of 10 or 15 yards separating them. Thus they stood and a little later they saw in the extreme distance cars being rushed away from the station which presumably contained the gallant commissioners. After some time the procession marched back in an orderly manner to the Congress office where after a little speechifying it dispersed.

It is difficult to estimate the number of casualties, but it is clear that hundreds of persons must have been injured, though probably the really grave injuries were fortunately not many. One man's life was despaired of and several had their heads split open. On the police side one of the Assistant Superintendents was hit on the hand by a stone.

After the end of the procession the students of Lucknow University, who had taken considerable part in it and who were largely responsible for the discipline and orderliness, marched back to their University quarters. At one place they were pursued by the police. There was a little argument between the two, the police threatening to arrest the lot. The Vice-Chancellor, however, appeared on the scene and damped the ardour of the police. Practically the whole day little processions of students and others went about the city and held meetings in Aminuddaula Park. The city observed a very fine *hartal*. In the

evening a great mass meeting was held at which Pandit Motilal Nehru and others spoke.

So far as I am concerned, I have not the slightest grievance against the government or the officials in Lucknow. The Boycott Committee ought to give them honourable badges for the tremendous help that it received owing to their stupidity in making the boycott demonstrations a magnificent success. Everything that they did was from the point of view of the government stupid in the extreme and from the point of view of the boycotters extremely felicitous. It was painful of course, to me and to others to see the extraordinarily callous and brutal behaviour of the police, but I suppose that is the price which we shall often have to pay. It was clear on the 30th that the police were out for vengeance. Indeed, they gloated about it afterwards, but in their stupidity did not realize that they had completely played into the hands of the boycotters. They have brought the real issue before the people of the country bereft of all sophistries and legal quibbles. That issue is that British rule in India means the policeman's baton and the bayonet and the real problem is how to overcome them. Logic and reason is unhappily lost on the baton and the bayonet. They will be overcome by the strength and the sanctions that the country develops. In this process of developing sanctions we can have no greater allies than British officials of the kind which Lucknow possesses today.

27. Statement on the Lathi-charge at Lucknow¹

Many friends have made anxious inquiries about my condition under the impression that I received serious injuries at Lucknow on 29th November. I should like to assure them that I am perfectly well and alive and kicking. The half a dozen or so *lathi* blows I received on my shoulders and back and legs may technically constitute serious injuries, but they have not hurt me much and I am none the worse for them.

1. Issued at Allahabad, 1 December 1928. *The Tribune*, 4 December 1928.

Indeed I feel better for them and am rather pleased with myself at having had the opportunity of sharing in the magnificent demonstration which Lucknow made yesterday morning. Even to see it was enough to make a sick man well. To participate in it and to have the privilege of working shoulder to shoulder with the gallant young men of Lucknow was worth far more than a few *lathi* blows.

I am thoroughly pleased at the new experience and at having found out that my back is strong enough and solid enough not to give way before *lathi* and baton blows. I may have been hurt more, if two or three gallant young men, students of the Lucknow University, had not insisted on constituting themselves a kind of bodyguard. They almost enveloped me much against my will and received numerous blows which otherwise might have fallen on me. Nobody need worry about me.

28. To Dharendra Mozumdar¹

Allahabad

5 December 1928

My dear Dhiren,²

... I received a number of hard *lathi* blows but apart from causing me a fair amount of pain and swelling and leaving marks behind there was no serious injury.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-8/1928, p. 11, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. A Gandhian worker since 1921.

29. To V. Chattopadhyaya¹

5 December 1928

My dear Chatto,

I do not know if you have been writing to me regularly but I do know that I have not been hearing from you regularly. After your letter of October 10th the next letter² has come today dated November 14.

You seem to be considerably perturbed about the speech I delivered at Meerut.³ I have warned you not to place too much reliance on press reports. As a rule they are bad but in reporting Urdu speeches in English they are even worse. I had said that what I was aiming at was the total ending of imperialism and until this happened there would always be trouble in India and elsewhere. I had even said that I might even accept Dominion Status if it could be conceived minus all imperialism but as I could not conceive this I was against Dominion Status.

Matters are certainly gradually coming to a head here and I agree with you that after the Simon Commission has reported we are likely to reach a critical stage. Exactly what will be done then I cannot say nor can you from a distance of several thousand miles give much advice. Action has to follow certain principles. It must also fit in with the circumstances. I am not afraid as I have often stated of violence that may be thrust on us. But I do think that essentially

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, pp. 1-3, N.M.M.L.

2. Chattopadhyaya in his letter had said, "You have time for organisation during the next few months. According to my reading of the Indian situation the revolutionary ferment will come to a head just after the Simon Commission has reported to Parliament and the Government prepares a plan of reforms for the purchase of the owning class. If you are organisationally prepared by this time, you will be able to strike a blow, just as Gandhi was able to do in 1921. But I hope that this time there will be no sentimental nonsense about the shedding of a few litres of blood, and that the revolutionary movement will be led on purely materialistic lines by trained Marxian revolutionaries."

3. In his address on 13 October 1928, Jawaharlal had said, "if a Constitution could be framed even under Dominion Status but fundamentally directed against imperialism" he would be prepared to support it.

our movement will have to be carried on on more or less peaceful lines including some kinds of civil disobedience and non-payment of rent and taxes if necessary. As for the movement being run by trained Marxists I fail to see any in India and I certainly do not consider myself as such. Generally of course I am in agreement with the theory and I believe that our political evolution must follow those lines. How and to what extent must depend on many circumstances. You must remember that situated as India is today the strongest appeal must inevitably come from nationalism.

You have not mentioned the receipt of the cable I sent you long ago asking you to invite your affiliated organizations to the Calcutta Congress. I presume you have got it as you say that these organizations are going to send messages to the Congress.

You must have read or will read about recent happenings in India. At Lucknow we were assaulted by the police with *Lathis*. The Simon boycott is undoubtedly becoming stronger largely because of the attitude of the officials. I had a fairly severe beating but was not greatly affected and I am recovering rapidly.

I had another query from Calcutta. It appears that Johnston⁴ has gone about claiming to represent you at the Trade Union Congress at Jharia. I was asked if Johnston was your representative. As you have not written to me anything about him and I do not know who he is I was unable to give any reply.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. The delegate of the American branch of the League against Imperialism who attended the Trade Union Congress held at Jharia. He also addressed several meetings at Calcutta and Bauria on labour problems. He was served with orders to leave India and was arrested on 18 December 1928.

30. Statement to the Press¹

In the press communique issued by the U.P. Government about the incidents of November 29th and 30th at Lucknow, there are many incorrect statements and a great deal of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*. I do not, however, propose to discuss the incidents again. One statement in the communique, however, is so extraordinary that it merits a little attention. It is stated that "contrary to agreement" our little groups of twelve were reinforced in numbers as they proceeded, and "failed to follow the route settled". These groups were being led by the mounted police, and there were policemen to the right and to the left of them. All we did was to follow the mounted vanguard of the police, and it is really amazing to be told that we broke any agreement by going along a different route.

Our impression was that if we had sought to rid ourselves of this vanguard by going along any other route, we might have had a little *lathi* play again on our backs. The second charge, of people following us, is also indicative of a loosening of the mental apparatus of those responsible for it. How a handful of us, marching along the road, could prevent others going the same way along the pavements or following us, passes my comprehension.

1. Issued at Allahabad, 4 December 1928. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 5 December 1928.

31. To R. Bridgeman¹

5 December 1928

My dear Bridgeman,

Many thanks for your cable. I had quite an exciting time at Lucknow and although the police gave us many hard blows I thoroughly enjoyed myself. In my excitement I hardly noticed the blows and indeed

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 5. N.M.M.L.

it was many hours later that I discovered numerous black patches with swelling all over my body. No vital part however was hurt and I am recovering. My wife's brother who is a student in the University and another student in trying to protect me were badly hurt and got some fractures.

The result of Lucknow has been the stiffening of the Simon boycott. This boycott is now undoubtedly much more widespread and deeper than it was earlier in the year when Simon first came. It has just been decided by the nationalist papers not to publish proceedings of the Simon Commission. There is also a strong movement to boycott socially people who cooperate with the commission. Out of evil cometh good and so we have no reason to be dissatisfied with the happenings at Lucknow.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

32. To Subhas Chandra Bose¹

6/12/1928

My dear Subhas,

.....
You must have seen how daily assaults are being committed in Lucknow by the police. The officials seem to have gone mad. I learnt by telephone last night that thousands of policemen had been imported into Lucknow. The place was like a fortress. Perhaps this is only an exhibition of Haileyism.² Anyway I am quite content with it. It has done more good to our public life than anything we could have done.
.....

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-80/1929, pp. 127-128, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

2. Sir William Malcolm Hailey (1872-1969); joined I.C.S. 1895; Home Member, Government of India 1922-24; Governor of the Punjab, 1924-28; Governor of the U.P., 1928-33; author of *An African Survey*.

33. To Mahatma Gandhi¹

An incident which took place yesterday morning might interest you. I have not mentioned it in my statement. Soon after the mounted and foot police had driven us back near the station, a young man, whom I took to be a student, came to me and said that he could bring me two revolvers immediately if I wanted to use them. We had just experienced baton and *lathi* charges and there was a great deal of anger and resentment in the crowd. I suppose he thought that it was a favourable moment to make the offer. I told him not to be foolish. Soon after, I found out quite casually that this particular person was known to be in the C.I.D.

1. This extract from Jawaharlal's letter to Mahatma Gandhi was published in *Young India*, 13 December 1928.

34. Evidence in Desh Bhagat Case¹

Examined by defence counsel, Pt. Jawaharlal said that he was one of the two secretaries of the Indian National Congress. He had also been President of the All India Trade Union Congress as well as President of the U.P. Congress Committee. For some time he was also practising as a barrister but gave up practice about the time of noncooperation.

1. *The Tribune*, 9 August 1929.

On 7 August 1929 Jawaharlal was examined as a defence witness in the magistrate's court at Meerut in the sedition case wherein Atar Sain, editor *Desh Bhagat*, was being prosecuted for the alleged publication of a seditious poem entitled: 'Cease Repression O Tyrant, because this is the Way to Stop Bomb-throwing in the country.'

He was present at Lucknow at the time of the Simon Commission there. There were several processions and demonstrations for the boycott of the commission. He took part in two big processions and a third (which might also be technically called a procession), besides public meetings. In these processions, continued Pandit Jawaharlal, nobody was armed to his knowledge. The first word *nihatha* in the fifth line of the poem in question meant unarmed. At two of these processions he was present when the police attacked. The procession, which he had technically termed as a procession, consisted of 16 persons, and they were attacked by the police, before the two remaining groups of sixteen persons each could form and follow the procession separately. The policemen, who attacked were on horseback and were armed with regulation *lathis*. They used their *lathis* freely on those 16 men as well as on the people who then happened to be on the pavements. The word *dil kholkar* in the poem meant freely. Pandit Jawaharlal declared that he was one of those 16 men of the group who received *lathi* blows and thought that it was an act of gross abuse of power which could be described as *zulum*.

The word *zulum* in the poem meant a person who was guilty of *zulum*. Witness emphasised that he condemned this action of the police on numerous occasions in speeches and in statements made to the press. He said that he had spoken of the incident and the subsequent incidents in the same strain in which he had described them in court and his statement on the subject was published to his knowledge in all the newspapers in India. These incidents were condemned in similar and stronger language by the press as well as by various organisations, including the Congress. No action, civil or criminal, was started against witness for having made those statements.

Cross-examined by the prosecution inspector, witness stated that he did not know whether the accused was a member of the Congress or not. Further cross-examined, he stated that he received two *lathi* blows. He could not give the number of injuries which the processionists received but there were many *lathi* blows. He could not conclude that the police objected to the particular road on which they were attacked. That road to his knowledge was not included among the prohibited roads. Witness averred that the police did not like any demonstrations or processions against the Simon Commission. He concluded: 'The basis of Indian criminal legislation, in my opinion, is wrong.'

LEAGUE AGAINST IMPERIALISM

1. To Roger Baldwin¹

13 March 1928

My dear Baldwin,

Thank you for your letter of February 9th. I entirely agree with what you have said in your letter to Gibarti. I gather from Liau that Gibarti is on leave and is recuperating. He certainly is in need of rest but his absence does not carry us very far unless something positive is done. Liau says that some wonderful changes are going to be made in the headquarters' organisation. I do not know what these are going to be but I hope that to begin with at any rate stress will be laid on the proper functioning of the office.

Last year I gave £ 100/- on behalf of the Indian National Congress to Edo Fimmen for the League. In spite of many reminders I have not even received a receipt for the sum. This makes it difficult for us to make further contributions and all manner of objections are raised by our auditors. As a matter of fact I have got sanction for another £ 100/- for the League but I cannot send it till I get a receipt for the former £ 100/- and also till I have some assurance that the office is working properly.

I hope your offer to pay a salary for a competent assistant will be accepted but now that the Paris Office appears to be closed up for the time being owing to the absence of Gibarti I do not see what Ventadour² could do in the matter. We are having rather a difficult time here but on the whole we are getting on. The boycott of the Simon Commission has been a very great success in spite of the coloured cables which you might have seen in the press. The next step, however, is a little more difficult.

War preparations are going on apace in India. Recruiting is very brisk and doctors and engineers are being roped in. The North-West Frontier of India is in the height of activity and judging particularly from the Indian preparations one would say that war is not very distant.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 409, N.M.M.L.

2. Secretary of the French branch of the League against Imperialism.

I shall try to send you some material about the political prisoners in India.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. To Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi¹

15/3/1928

My dear Ganesh Shankarji,

I have already sent a telegram to you agreeing to preside over the Mazdur Sabha anniversary on April 1st. Another date had been given to me previously but I suppose this was changed to April 1st.

I want to issue from the A.I.C.C. office a concise statement dealing with political prisoners in India. This will be meant for foreign countries and must therefore be brief and yet quite clear. Can you help me to prepare this? I believe you are in charge of the political sufferers' fund and should have a great deal of useful information. It is possible that we may get some money from abroad, specially the United States of America, for political sufferers here. I hope you will be able to send me a note on political prisoners.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-35/1928, p. 81, N.M.M.L.

3. To Subhas Chandra Bose¹

15/3/1928

My dear Subhas,

You will remember that I spoke to you in Calcutta about the desirability

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-35/1928, p. 5, N.M.M.L.

of preparing a short memorandum on the Bengal detenus² for foreign countries. Something brief, concise and yet capable of being understood by a stranger who has not heard of the subject before. I have just received a reminder from Roger Baldwin, Director of the Civil Liberties Union in the United States, about whom I spoke to you. He wants to have facts about political prisoners in India for use in the United States. He may also be able to help us a little with money. His organisation is a powerful one and we should try to supply him with all the details he requires. I want to have two notes prepared, one on political prisoners generally and the second on the detenus. I hope you will at least take charge of the latter and let me have it soon.

Should you wish to communicate directly with Baldwin his address is:

Roger N. Baldwin
Director, Civil Liberties Union
100 Fifth Avenue
New York City N.Y.

But perhaps it will be better for you to send the note on the detenus to him through me. I could also send it to other foreign organisations.

It might be a desirable thing to send Baldwin a complimentary copy of the *Forward*.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Those who were arrested and detained without trial under the Bengal Ordinance of October 1924.

4. Circular to Provincial Congress Committees¹

Allahabad
27 March 1928

Dear Sir,

It is proposed to issue a concise statement giving particulars about political prisoners in India. I shall be very glad of your assistance in preparing this statement. You are no doubt aware that stress is often

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-35/1928, p. 37, N.M.M.L.

laid on the large number of detenus and other prisoners being still kept in jails and often ill-treated. Friends in foreign countries ask for accurate facts in regard to them and it is therefore necessary to prepare some statement which they can understand without any previous knowledge of the subject. You will therefore kindly send me all the information required giving figures for the detenus separately from other prisoners.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. To H.S. Liau¹

18 April 1928

My dear Liau,

I have your letter of the 21st March with its enclosures. I met Chaman Lal² the other day in Lahore and enquired from him as to what has taken place at Cawnpore. He was surprised to learn of what you had written to me.³ He said that he had absolutely no objection then or now to the T.U.C. affiliating with the League. But they did not then have and they do not now have a copy of your rules even. It is obviously difficult to go ahead without having your Constitution. I am also finding some difficulty owing to my not having a set of your rules. Will you kindly have printed copies of these sent to me as well as to other organisations? Letters and appeals cannot go very far without these rules.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 383, N.M.M.L.

2. Dewan Chamanlal (b. 1892); founder member, All India Trade Union Congress; member, Central Legislative Assembly 1923-31; member, Royal Commission on Labour 1928-31; represented India in the International Labour Conference at Geneva in 1928, 1932 and 1946; member, Punjab Legislative Assembly 1936-45; member, Constituent Assembly 1946-48; Ambassador of India in Turkey 1948-49; member, Rajya Sabha 1952-1967.

3. Liau in his letter to Jawaharlal had referred to an article in *Worker's Life* in which it was stated that "Chamanlal, Joshi and other trade unionists had opposed the affiliation of the Trade Union Congress to the League against Imperialism on the ground that the latter was a 'communist manoeuvre'."

As you are aware I was present at the T.U.C. meeting at Delhi last month. I spoke against the affiliation of the T.U.C. with Amsterdam. I was present merely as a visitor but I may be put on their committee soon.

I am anxiously awaiting the decision in Mohammad Hatta's case⁴. Send my love to him if you are writing to him.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. B. 1902; a leader of the Indonesian nationalist movement; Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia, 1945-49 and again from 1950-56; Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, 1948; Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1949-50. In September 1927 four leaders of the Perhimpunan Indonesia, including Hatta, were accused of inciting rebellion against the Dutch Government and were arrested, but were released after trial by the Court.

6. To Edo Fimmen¹

7 May 1928

My dear Fimmen,

S. Srinivasa Iyengar, an ex-president of the Indian National Congress, has just left India for Europe. I have given him a letter of introduction for you. In case he meets you in Amsterdam or elsewhere I hope you will tell him all about the League against Imperialism and get a good donation from him. He can well afford it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 363, N.M.M.L.

7. To Roger Baldwin¹

14 May 1928

My dear Baldwin,

Thanks for your letter of April 11th which I have received today.

The Berlin office of the League has been sending me quite a large number of letters and it would appear at least that something is being done. But whether this has resulted in anything solid is not clear.

As suggested by you I am writing to Maxton.² I am afraid he has too many troubles of his own to pay much attention to the League.

I have sent a first instalment of £ 50 for the League to Edo Fimmen. When I hear from him I shall send another £ 50.

I am sorry I have not sent you a note on the political prisoners in India. I have been trying to get the latest facts but most of our provincial offices are not helping in getting these. They are almost as bad as the office of the League against Imperialism. You wanted Gandhi to write some kind of an appeal. He is not keen on doing anything of the kind. As for Lajpat Rai I would rather not ask him.

There is just a chance of my father going to Canada.³ The Empire Inter-Parliamentary Union, or some such body, invited some members of the Indian Legislatures and he is one of the delegates chosen. He will try to go if he can find the time. If he goes to Canada he may visit the States for a few days also.

With warm regards,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 355, N.M.M.L.

2. James Maxton (1885-1946); M.P. from Glasgow, 1922-46; leader of the Independent Labour Party and an eloquent orator.

Baldwin had written to Jawaharlal asking him to write to Maxton and "stir him up to some sense of responsibility as Chairman of the League." For Jawaharlal's letter to Maxton, see following item.

3. Motilal Nehru was invited to visit Canada as a member of the Empire Parliamentary Delegation but finally decided not to go.

8. To James Maxton¹

14/5/28

Dear Mr. Maxton,

I was very glad to learn that you had accepted the presidentship of the League against Imperialism. I have all along felt that the League could be made to do the most excellent work in bringing nearer to each other the various nationalist movements of the East and in putting them in touch with the progressive labour movements of the West. I believe in the future of the League but I must confess that I have often been troubled by the very obvious mismanagement of the League office. During my stay last year in Europe I tried with Roger Baldwin to induce the people in charge to organise the office on business lines, but with little success, I am sorry to say.

I am told that something has been done now but I cannot judge from this distance. I hope that now that you are the president you will take interest in the League and see to it that its office functions properly. I am positive that if we organise properly we are bound to make our influence felt for good. Even with the present organisation the League has established a name for itself in distant parts. What is required is concentration on the everyday routine of the office and not so much the issuing of manifestos. Our friends on the continent are a little too fond of issuing manifestos and resolutions of enormous length. This business element I am sure you will supply to the League if you give a little time to it.

Last year the Indian National Congress contributed £ 100 to the League. This year it has sanctioned a similar amount. I have sent £ 50 to Edo Fimmen and on hearing from him shall send him another £ 50. I do not think there would be much difficulty in raising funds for the League if it was realised that its office was functioning properly.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 357, N.M.M.L.

9. To R. Bridgeman¹

11 June 1928

My dear Bridgeman,

Thank you for your letter of the 17th May. My last letter² to you was not meant as a formal document to be placed before the British section of the League. I had merely referred to the feeling of the man in the street in so far as hostility to England was concerned. So far as the Congress is concerned it has declared itself in favour of independence and I have every hope that it will stick to it. There are undoubtedly groups in the Congress and outside who would be prepared to compromise for less. I feel also that India's cooperation cannot be purchased by England at any price now. There is absolutely no chance of a repetition³ of what took place in 1914.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 347, N.M.M.L.

2. The text of this letter is not available.

3. All sections of Indian opinion, including the Congress, had extended full support to the British Empire when the First World War had started.

10. To V. Chattopadhyaya¹

26 June 1928

My dear Chatto,

I have received your two letters dated the 20th May.

You write to say that you feel very tired and homesick. I can understand the feeling but I do not suppose you would feel happy if you were nearer home. Things are pretty dull here and it is extremely difficult to wake people up. And the feeling of being tired is common enough here too, the only difference being that it is not the result of work but of doing nothing. I wish you would not bother about coming back to India. I am sure you would be disillusioned after a few weeks.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 335, N.M.M.L.

I hope the draft and the tea reached you safely.

My father has not yet quite decided whether to go to Canada or not. If he goes he might leave by the end of July or the beginning of August. He would go straight to England and then to Canada. He proposes to return via Japan and China. But I doubt if he will go.

Did I write to you that poor Kamala is again laid up? In spite of what your friend Klemperer said the doctors here are of opinion that she has got lung trouble still or it may be that it has revived again after a period of quiescence. Ranjit has also just been through a severe attack of pleuro-pneumonia.

I was delighted to receive a picture card from Koln from you and Liao and his wife. Please thank them for it and give them my regards. It made me wish that I had been with you there also.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. To R. Bridgeman¹

26 June 1928

My dear Bridgeman,

Thank you for your letter of the 1st June and for the circular about the first British Conference² of the League against Imperialism. This letter will reach you many days after the conference. So there is no point in my writing anything for the conference.

I am glad to learn that the British section of the League is making good progress. We have all been interested in the news that Maxton and Cook³ have publicly protested against the official Labour leaders. It has been a wonder to me how any person who calls himself an anti-imperialist can put up with the policy of the Labour Party in regard to India, Egypt or China.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 325, N.M.M.L.

2. Held on 7 July 1928.

3. A.J. Cook (1885-1931); general secretary, Miners Federation of Great Britain and one of the leaders of the General Strike in 1926.

The President of the All India Congress Committee, Dr. Ansari, has sent a cable to Srinivasa Iyengar requesting him to represent the Congress at your first conference. I trust he was able to do so.

You must have noticed in the press that India is going through a series of strikes and lockouts. The whole mill industry in Bombay is affected and a large section of railway workers. I do not suppose that labour will win anywhere. They are too poor and too ill-organised to be able to resist long. But poor as they are they have put up an amazingly good fight. This shows if indeed any evidence was necessary that their present lot is almost unbearable and anything is better.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

12. To V. Chattopadhyaya¹

July 1928

My dear Chatto,

The last mail brought three letters from your office dated June 6th, 13th and 20th. It also brought the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of the League dated the 28th April. The fact that all these letters came together shows that somebody was probably profiting by reading them on the way. You say that you have been writing to our office weekly. As a matter of fact I have not received weekly letters from you. It is probable therefore that some had disappeared *en route*. I received some time ago your leaflet containing the resolutions of the General Council. I thought I had already acknowledged it.

I have just been reading the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting. They have given me a good idea of the position. On the whole I am inclined to think that the outlook is not quite so bad as was made out by some people at the meeting. But undoubtedly it is a difficult job. The minutes have given me the first information of the fact that you are one of the new Secretaries.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, pp. 271-275, N.M.M.L.

I have not seen in the papers the resolutions passed by your Committee at Brussels. I am therefore having them duplicated and sending copies to the principal newspapers.

I have not received any circular letter so far from you about the proposed World Congress of the League in 1929. I am afraid April is a very difficult time for an Indian representative to go. It is easier to manage a visit later in the summer. However this is a small matter. So far as I am personally concerned I am afraid there is not the least chance of my being able to attend the meeting. I should love to go but many reasons, one of the all important ones being the question of funds, effectively prevent me from going. I had a telegram from Srinivasa Iyengar suggesting that the Congress might nominate him as a fraternal delegate to the conference of the British section. Ansari thereupon sent him a cable authorising him to attend the conference on behalf of the Indian Congress. I had a letter from Bridgeman suggesting a cable of greetings to the conference but this letter arrived just too late and so I did not send any cable.

I think it is a good thing to open branches, if you may so call them, of the Indian National Congress in London and Paris and Berlin. A branch with a fair membership can get definitely affiliated or recognised by the Congress Executive here and can thus automatically represent the Congress in foreign countries. As for the goal of independence I do not suppose that the Congress is ever likely to go back on its Madras resolution. But as you must know, every effort is being made not so much to attack the resolution openly, because that is difficult, but almost to ignore it in many ways. This is very unfortunate but not surprising. Most of our leaders have yet to grasp the full significance of the Independence idea. Even if the Congress should unfortunately turn down its Independence resolution not by another resolution but in actual practice, this does not in any way compromise the Congress Committee abroad. I hope therefore that Indians in Berlin will certainly form such a committee. Groups of Indians abroad will thus be able to bring some little pressure on our home politicians.

I have suggested to the Hindustani Seva Dal to get themselves affiliated or associated with you. In a sense they might be considered indirectly associated already as they are an associate body of the Indian Congress. You once asked me about the Republican League. This League ought certainly to have got into touch with you but after a flourish of trumpets in Madras it vanished into thin air.² This of course does not mean that there was not enough support for it. It simply

2. See *ante*, Section 1, item 13.

means that the Secretaries and other organisers did not work at all and allowed it to lapse. I hate to be connected with any organisation run in this slipshod manner. I tried my best to wake up these people but would you believe it I have not yet succeeded in getting copies of the Constitution and rules as passed in Madras? How can one take any action without even these papers?

It would be a good thing for you to get the Sikh League associated with you. I shall write to Mangal Singh about it. The Rashtriya Stree Sabha is hardly the kind of organisation which will take an intense interest in your activities. By the way, in spite of repeated requests you have not sent me a copy of your rules and objects. Surely this is the very first thing that you should send to any one who wants to join you and yet apparently you have had no such leaflet printed. Whenever I have suggested to any organisation to become associated with you the invariable reply has been, send us a copy of their rules. And as I do not possess such a copy and indeed I have never seen one the matter has ended there. Please have an attractive leaflet printed giving a very brief account of the history of the League, the work done, the objects, the rules and conditions of affiliation and association.

I am having some of our old Congress publications sent to you. They are not of much use now but perhaps they may be required for reference.

Ranjit and Swarup sailed for Europe last week. Ranjit is going on legal business on behalf of some minor Indian chiefs.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

13. To Mangal Singh¹

10 July 1928

My dear Sardar Mangal Singh,
I learn from the Secretary of the League against Imperialism that he has written to you suggesting that the Sikh League might affiliate with the League against Imperialism. I hope you will consider this request

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 267, N.M.M.L.

favourably. I feel that it is very desirable for our organisations to associate themselves with international bodies like the League against Imperialism. This helps the anti-imperialist cause and at the same time it broadens our own outlook.

There are two ways of cooperating with the League against Imperialism. One is direct affiliation which means a close contact and an acceptance of all the principles and activities of the League; the other is association which implies an agreement in regard to the objects of the organisation and general activities but not necessarily in agreement with all the activities or resolutions of the League. The Indian National Congress has become an associate body of the League and I think it will suit the Sikh League better to become an associate body rather than an affiliated body. This does not mean being tied down to anything and leaves you perfectly free to act in any manner that you may choose.

In any event I trust you will send your publications and your communiques regularly to the League Office in Berlin. The address is:—

League against Imperialism,
24, Friedrichstrasse,
Berlin S.W. 48.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

14. To Roger Baldwin¹

19 July 1928

My dear Baldwin,

I have just received your letter of the 14th June. I have come up to a hill station in the Himalayas for a few days. My wife is spending the summer here.

A couple of weeks ago I received the full report of the meeting of the Executive Committee of the League which was held in Brussels.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 265, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

I had not realised till then how persistent had been the opposition of the officials of the Second International to the League. It seems to me that except for Maxton and a few others of the I.L.P. in England there is hardly any important non-communist element in the socialist parties in Europe which is not opposing the League. This is most unfortunate. You know that I agree with you that the League should not become purely a communist organisation. But it seems to me that the socialist parties of Europe are bent on making it so. I do not see what I can do from this distance. At the present moment if the communist element dropped out from the League it would immediately become a lifeless body. The only satisfactory feature is the association of some nationalist organisations with the League and these are certainly not communist. Maxton's presidentship is of course good. What would you suggest that I should do to 'reinforce' your position?²

The British Labour Party as a whole, leaving out Maxton and Cook and a few others, is going from bad to worse so far as India or the colonial question is concerned. MacDonald has taken up such a blatantly imperialist attitude, and our dear friend Lansbury has loyally followed him, that everybody in India is thoroughly fed up with British Labour. The mere mention of MacDonald's name is enough to anger people here. I do not refer to the communists here as they are few but to the members of various political parties here who think in terms of nationalism only * * * *

I learn that it is proposed to hold a full Congress of the League in April next. Will you be able to attend it? I am afraid that there is little chance of my getting away from India then or later.

My father has had to give up his visit to Canada. It has been a great disappointment to him specially as he hoped to visit the States in the course of the visit. But our internal politics would not permit it.

With all good wishes,

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Baldwin had written to Jawaharlal: "You know the Berlin Office as well as I do and can figure both on its ability and its political connections. My own feeling is that the League must be strengthened by more elements from the right and by less obvious Communist direction. I know how you feel about that and perhaps you can reinforce that position."

15. The Changing Face of Imperialism¹

"In olden times imperialism was satisfied with no less than a general levy of the inhabitants of a conquered territory to make them serve as slaves; later on it took possession of the land, leaving the people a certain autonomy; today it contents itself with taking hold of the sources of wealth, leaving the land and the inhabitants to themselves". So wrote Manuel Ugarte², the new prophet of Latin America. Economic imperialism and dollar diplomacy have been common phrases in the West, but the full significance of this new method of holding dominion over another people is not yet fully realised in our country. Some of us talk of independence for India, others of Dominion Status, but few realise that these are mere words which may mean much or nothing at all. There are many countries today calling themselves independent, with fine constitutions on paper, which dare not do anything which displeases their real masters in Wall Street or in the City of London. If even independence may be almost an airy nothing how much less must be Dominion Status, which presumes all manner of economic bonds with England?

It is worthwhile therefore for us to study this new development of imperialism. Professor Parker Moon has recently given us a comprehensive survey of the whole subject — *Imperialism and World Politics* — which within a year or two has attained the dignity of a classic. But to understand the inner workings of modern imperialism a more detailed study is necessary. It is not easy to carry on this study in the British dependencies as the economic motive, though all powerful, is often obscured by the actual possession of territory. England has not yet emerged from Ugarte's second category of nations. The United States of America, however, have few such colonial encumbrances and they can carry on their career of profit without troubling themselves much with the government of dependencies and national movements of protest. It is the United States therefore which offer us the best field for the study of economic imperialism.

1. 21 July 1928. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 28 July 1928.

2. (1878-1961); Argentine writer, and propagandist against 'Yankee imperialism'.

The Vanguard Press of New York city has provided us with detailed studies of American imperialism in various countries. Helped by the American Fund for Public Service, competent investigators were appointed, and they have collected together facts and figures which without any rhetoric make us realise the helpless condition of so-called independent countries before the all-powerful magnates of Wall Street.

One of these books deals with Bolivia. It is called *The Bankers in Bolivia* and the author is Margaret A. Marsh. Once part of the proud empire of the Incas, Bolivia today is a poverty-stricken country in the grip of American financiers. The great majority of her people, the descendants of those who had a fine civilisation when Columbus is said to have "discovered" the Americas, spend their lives today in toiling for a miserable pittance in mines for foreign masters.

Nature has been unkind to Bolivia. Having provided her with rich mineral resources she has made them difficult of access. The high mountain range of the Andes has cut the country into two — on the East the rich fertile but thinly peopled land and on the West the bleak tableland 13,000 ft. high, rich in minerals but destitute of water and fuel — and communications between the two are extremely slow and primitive. The Pacific Ocean though near is cut off by the Andes, and the Atlantic is thousands of miles away. But if nature has been unkind to Bolivia, man has been unkind.

Gold and silver attracted the Spaniards of old to Upper Peru, as Bolivia then was, but today it is a homelier article, tin, that makes the United States cast covetous eyes on her. Next to the Federation Malay States, Bolivia is the biggest producer of tin in the world and the United States with all their mineral resources have no tin, and tin is an essential commodity today in peace and war. Great Britain controls the Malay deposits and has a monopoly of tin smelting.

Tin therefore is the main factor in Bolivian politics. There is oil also, and large tracts of oil producing lands have already been acquired by the Standard Oil Co., but the difficulties of transportation have so far prevented any production. Tin is the chief source of revenue of the republic and on the world price of tin depends its solvency or bankruptcy. But only a very small part of the profits from tin go to the public treasury. Most of the industry being in foreign hands, enormous profits leave the country in the shape of dividends. The mining companies reap the profits but the men who produce them are the Indian labourers who work in these inhospitable mountain regions for long hours so that dividends may be high. The laws of Bolivia provide for an eight hour day but apparently this provision is more honoured in its breach than its observance. We are told that a British

Company works its Indian labourers, men and women, twelve hours a day; and incredible as it seems there is a mine near Potosi where the Indians work a thirty-six hour shift with little intervals for food and cocoa!

In 1908 Bolivia had no foreign debt; in 1927 her external debt amounted to over forty million dollars, almost all of which was borrowed in the United States. The career of borrowing, once started, led to all manner of entanglements and has now reduced Bolivia to hopeless subservience to New York bankers. In 1921 a six months loan of a million dollars was taken from American bankers with an option to them on any external loan the Republic might make within the next three years. This option proved the undoing of the Republic. Next year they had to negotiate another loan and although they were offered better terms by English and French bankers and other American companies they were forced by the optional clause to agree to the much more onerous terms of their old creditors.

The contract for this Refunding Loan of 1922 between the Republic and the Equitable Trust Company of New York is a most illuminatory document. The bonds carry specific and inclusive securities which covered in 1922 almost half the total national revenue and in 1923, owing to increase in mining profits, almost two thirds of the national income. Among the securities pledged were:-

1. all the shares in the National Bank belonging to the Republic, with the proviso that the Republic will always have controlling shares in the Bank,
2. all dividends on these shares,
3. the tax upon mining claims and concessions,
4. the revenue from the alcohol monopoly,
5. ninety per cent of the revenues from the tobacco company,
6. tax on corporations other than mining and banking,
7. tax upon net income of banks,
8. tax on interest on mortgage cedulas,
9. tax on net profits of mining companies,
10. all import duties,
11. surcharge on import duties,
12. all export duties.

The list is comprehensive and it is not apparent what important item of revenue is left out. As further security however mortgages and liens were created on all properties and earnings of railways constructed and *to be constructed*.

The customs receipts alone amounted to 45% of the total revenue of Bolivia. In addition all kinds of direct and indirect taxes were included,

and with a vision worthy of a better cause the financiers included in their securities which might come into existence in the future the railways to be constructed.

Further it was stipulated that a Permanent Fiscal Commission of three, two members of which were to be nominated by the bankers, one of them being chairman, should have charge of the collection of taxes in the Republic during the life of the loan — twenty five years. The Commission could collect all taxes, national and departmental, and could revise the nation's accounts. The President of the Commission was to become the Inspector General of Banks and Monopolies, and also a director of the National Bank.

It was further laid down that the bonds were not redeemable before 1937, and even then may only be redeemed as a whole at 105 with accrued interest, a price 13 points higher than the issue price. Thus the Republic is prevented from converting its obligations at lower rate and is made to pay a sum far in excess of what was received. And so long as the loan lasts the practical control of the State rests with the Equitable Trust Company of New York.

What measure of independence Bolivia enjoys under the terms of this contract it is not difficult to see. So far the Republic, though protesting, has fulfilled the terms of the contract. But should it fail to do so the State Department in Washington would forthwith intervene and in the name of the sanctity of contracts extract the pound of flesh from the bankers. In Nicaragua, Salvador and other countries the United States government has already acted as the tax collector for its financiers. In Bolivia the need has not so far arisen. Should it arise Washington will not be slow to act. And Bolivia is the third largest country in the South American continent.

16. To V. Chattopadhyaya¹

Allahabad
3 October 1928

My dear Chatto,

I did not receive any letter from you last week. The last letter that came was dated 5th September. I think I have acknowledged it already together with the letters dated 23rd August and 29th August.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, pp. 153-54, N.A.M.J.

I have not received your circular letter about the next World Congress. But I got a copy from my father. I shall put it before the All India Congress Committee at its next meeting and suggest that some delegates should be appointed.² But it is no easy matter for them to appoint delegates when this means spending a lot of money. If some desirable person is going out to Europe next summer he may well be appointed. Will you let me know what other individuals or organisations your League is in touch with in India. So far as I know the only organisations are the Trade Union Congress, the Hindustani Seva Dal and may be the Sikh League. As for individuals Jhabvala³ is the only name I can remember. I shall try to get into touch with these people.

You have heard no doubt of the new Independence for India League. Very likely this will associate itself with you. It may also be a meeting ground for anti-imperialist activities. But so far it is in its infancy and requires organisation. Personally I would like it to concentrate on organisation and do nothing else till it has something to speak of.

It would be a very good thing if you can send a representative to the Trade Union Congress and the National Congress.

There is no doubt that there is a tendency to backslide in Congress circles here. This is very unfortunate. But I do not think that there is any chance of the Congress going back on its resolution of independence. Probably no such attempt will be made because it is feared that it may fail. Nonetheless the general impression is certainly gaining ground that the demand for independence is not honestly meant and is only made from the point of view of bargaining, the real demand being Dominion Status. It is not easy to fight vague impressions. Nonetheless there can be no doubt that there is a reaction also against the Dominion Status idea. My own notion is that the Congress will have to stand by independence and a little later when the sub-conscious belief that much may come out of the Nehru Report disappears there will be a firmer stand still.

The difficulty is not so much in getting resolutions to be passed. That can be done with ease anywhere. But then somehow or the

2. Shiva Prasad Gupta was selected to represent the Indian National Congress at the Second World Congress of the League against Imperialism and he attended the Congress.

3. S.H. Jhabvala (1884-1971); a well known trade union worker in Bombay; associated with a number of workers unions including the taxi drivers union of which he was the founder; was imprisoned for 4½ years in connection with the Meerut Conspiracy Case.

other it is extraordinarily difficult to induce people to act. Labour after a succession of struggles is exhausted. The peasantry is in a bad way and after the scarcity in rains is worse off still. The zamindars in most provinces and specially in the Bengal and the U.P. are triumphant over it. In Bengal the Congress party is largely under their influence and they went to the length of supporting them in a tenancy measure. From the U.P. reports come frequently of oppression and atrocities from zamindars. I intend to go tomorrow to see a doctor friend⁴ who has received a bad thrashing from hooligans employed by zamindars.

Another extraordinary feature is that certain politically advanced sections of people are extraordinarily backward socially. They live in an ideology of the past and refuse to recognise new forces. They distrust me very much because I talk of socialism. As you know few people here have heard of socialism and consequently they fear it. I find however that opinion is veering round strongly. There are no definite ideas still but there certainly is a vague appreciation of what socialism may signify.

You must have seen how very pleased our friend Lansbury is because the All Parties Conference has adopted Dominion Status. He has some reason to rejoice but he is a little premature.

I hope you met Ranjit and Swarup before they returned.

The Punjab Provincial Conference⁵ has just met and dispersed. You will see their resolutions in the newspapers. Very probably the resolutions of other Congress organisations as well as of Congress itself would be on these lines.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. Dr. Biswanath Mukherjee (1893-1942); a homoeopath and a prominent Congressman and a leader of the Workers' and Peasants' Party; accused in the Meerut Conspiracy Case; President, All India Sugar-cane Workers Union in 1938.

Mukherjee was beaten up by the hirelings of the raja of Tamkohi. See *post*, Section 15, item 13.

5. The Punjab Provincial Political Conference met at Lyallpur on 29 September 1928 under the chairmanship of Lala Dunichand. One of the resolutions was in favour of independence.

17. To the Secretary, League against Imperialism¹

October 9th, 1928

Dear Comrade,

The Indian National Congress holds its annual sessions in the last week of December in Calcutta. We shall be very glad if the League against Imperialism sends a fraternal delegate to our Calcutta sessions. On behalf of the National Congress I have great pleasure in inviting you to send your representative to our Calcutta sessions. I shall also thank you if you will kindly convey our invitation to all the organisations affiliated or associated with you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Maharashtra Government records, Police Commissioner's File No. 1291/B/I.

18. To V. Chattopadhyaya¹

9 October 1928

My dear Chatto,

I have at last received the first number of the *Anti-Imperialist Review*. It is well got up and contains interesting articles. I liked it. I hope you will be able to continue and maintain a high standard.

I have also received your letter² of the 19th September. I am sorry to say that no invitations have been issued so far as I know to various

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 113, N.M.M.L.
2. Chattopadhyaya had in his letter suggested that invitations to the Calcutta Congress should be issued to various organisations like the Egyptian National Party, the African National Congress, the Persian Socialist Party and the Perhipunan Indonesia.

national and other groups in other countries. This is usually the business of the Reception Committee. But I am certainly to blame for the omission. I am doing so now. Unfortunately I have not got the addresses of all the organisations. I have repeatedly suggested to you to issue a little pamphlet giving these addresses as well as addresses of members of your committee.

I enclose a formal invitation for the League. I also enclose a letter to Madam Sun Yat Sen which kindly forward to her. I shall be glad if you will convey through your office our invitations to the various organisations associated and affiliated with you. You might suggest that in case they cannot send any representative a message of greetings will be very welcome.

I wonder if you could give me information about a certain person called Dr. Ajoy Chandra Banerjee, (also spelt Banerjhi) a brahman from Behar. I have been approached by his old mother who lives in Allahabad for news of her son. I know nothing about him but I find reference to him in the "Communist Papers" published by the British Government in 1926. It is stated there that Banerjee was a medical student in England and an ardent communist though not a member of the Communist Party. He is believed to have gone to the Continent. His poor mother is naturally very anxious as she has not heard from him for two or three years. She will be happy to know that he is still alive somewhere. So if you happen to find out anything about him you might let me know.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

19. Circular on the Second World Congress of the League against Imperialism¹

Allahabad
20.10.28

You are doubtless aware that the Executive Committee of the League against Imperialism has decided to hold the Second World Congress

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, pp. 31 & 111, N.M.M.L.

of the League next year. It has decided to hold the Congress in Paris in July 1929.

The League has, during the year and a half of its existence, become a good friend of oppressed nations and peoples. It is daily adding to its strength by affiliations and otherwise. India has always occupied a prominent place in the programme of the League and it is desirable that India should take a full part in the next World Congress of the League.

The Executive Committee of the League have authorised me to take the necessary steps to form an organising committee of the League in India, Burma and Ceylon, with a view to insure that India participate fully in the World Congress.

I am sending this letter to all organisations in India which are affiliated or associated with the League against Imperialism with the request that they will nominate a representative to serve on this organising committee. All affiliated and associated organisations will be entitled to send representatives. We shall also welcome representatives from organisations which sympathise with the objects of the League.

May I request you to place this letter before your organisation and to let me know the name of your representative for the organising committee.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

20. To V. Chattopadhyaya¹

25 October 1928

My dear Chatto,

I have your letters dated September 12th and September 26th. I have also received your circular letter about next year's World Congress.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 89, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

I am glad to learn that De Valera² intends to get his party to affiliate to the League. Also that the National Amalgamated Furnishing Trades Association is affiliating. I hope many other trade unions will follow in England and elsewhere. . .

The Independence for India League which has recently been formed may well serve as a centre for anti-imperialist activities. So far it is more or less in the air. We are having a meeting next week to put the organisation on a better basis. Meanwhile I am communicating with your associated organisations in India. Unfortunately you do not help at all by supplying addresses and the like. I am looking forward to receiving a pamphlet containing your objects, rules and regulations as well as a full list of the members of your executive council and general council and your associated organisations with addresses in each case.

I am enquiring about the Sikh League. I am afraid that they are hardly likely to pay much attention to your League at present. They seem to have developed a very strong communal outlook.

I am sorry I have not sent you an article for your Review. I have been fairly well occupied but the real reason was that I was not in a mood to write it. I shall endeavour to contribute something for your third number.

The need for a newspaper is keenly felt. We shall discuss the question at the meeting of the Independence League. I did not write to you last week as I have been very much put out by Kamala's ill health. She had a relapse which necessitated my rushing off to Mussoorie suddenly. She has come back to Allahabad now and is a little better.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Eamon De Valera (b. 1882); joined Irish Volunteers in 1913; commandant in Irish rebellion in 1916; death sentence commuted on technical grounds to penal servitude for life; released by general amnesty in 1917; President, Sinn Féin, 1917-26; Prime Minister, Government of Ireland, 1937-48, 1951-54 and 1957-59; President, Irish Republic since 1959.

21. To R. Bridgeman¹

25 October 1928

My dear Bridgeman,

I was glad to get your letter of the 23rd September. I have been reading accounts of the progress that the British Section of the League has been making. I realise the forces you have against you in England. It was therefore a special pleasure to find that you are getting on well and that you have succeeded in getting the National Amalgamated Furnishing Trades Association to affiliate to the League. I learn from Berlin that there is some chance of De Valera's party also affiliating. I hope that other trade unions and parties will follow.

You know from the Indian papers the general trend of happenings here. On the whole the prospect is not as bad as it might appear. Some of our leading politicians have more or less allied themselves with the moderate group and have toned down their demands in an attempt to keep these moderates with them. These tactics are always doomed to failure and they do a great deal of injury. The reaction against this however has been marked.

It seems from the general behaviour of the Simon Commission that their recommendations are likely to be such as to annoy the most moderate of Indians. That would be better than some halting progress.

There are many general indications here also of war preparations but it is difficult to know details. Such preparations are hardly called for unless there was a definite prospect of war.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 23/1929-1930, p. 143, N.M.M.L.

Bridgeman in his letter commended Jawaharlal's firm stand on independence, hoped that the All India Trade Union Congress would affiliate itself with the League against Imperialism and spoke of the British military disposition in India in the event of a war with Russia.

22. To V. Chattopadhyaya¹

31 October 1928

My dear Chatto,

I have just returned from Jhansi where I presided over the U.P. Provincial Conference. I found your letter of the 10th October waiting for me. I have noted your suggestions.² I am not quite sure how far all of them are feasible just at present. In spite of all our past experience it is not at all easy to work on all-India lines. Some of the bigger provinces becomes jealous immediately and want to go along the path of their choosing. There are of course many other disruptive elements. Above everything there is the extraordinary difficulty of finding really competent men to do any work. The result is that almost everything has to be done by oneself and that is no way of carrying on any work.

I do not know the address of Dr. Manilal³ of Fiji. I shall however find it out and ask him to communicate with you. I shall also write to Banarsidas Chaturvedi.⁴ He is at present editing a Hindi magazine called the *Vishal Bharat*. It is issued by the Modern Review Press and deals with Indians abroad.

I do not know much about the All India 'Teachers' Conference. You say that it is going to be held on the 3rd of November. There is absolutely no time now to communicate with anyone nor I can think of any very suitable persons. You must know that the average teacher is a government servant or a professor in an aided university which is equally bad and it is very difficult to get them to move. The students

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 43, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. Chattopadhyaya in his letter of 10th October had suggested an All India Conference of the League in Calcutta. For this purpose he had proposed the issue of a manifesto in all the Indian languages and the appointment of a full time secretary of the League in India.
3. Manilal Maganlal Shah of Baroda, also known as Dr. Manilal; worked for Indian immigrants in Mauritius from 1907 to 1912 and from 1912 in Fiji; led the militant strike of the P.W.D. and municipal workers of Suva in 1920; was expelled from many parts of Fiji and returned to India; from 1923, interested in Indian labour problems.
4. B. 1892; edited *Vishal Bharat*, a Hindi monthly journal from Calcutta 1928 to 1939; took great interest in the problems of Indians overseas; joint author of biography of Andrews; member of Rajya Sabha 1952-64.

of Allahabad sometimes ask me to address them. This got on the nerves of our worthy Vice-Chancellor⁵ here who is an orthodox Hindu Sanskrit scholar. He has now passed an official order that no outsiders should be invited by any student body without his special permission and our students have meekly submitted to it.

I shall write to Lakshmi⁶ about the Educational Workers' Manifesto.

I am going to Delhi tomorrow for the All India Committee meeting. Also for the meeting of the Independence for India League...

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. Professor Ganganath Jha.

6. Shrimati Lakshmi Menon, educationist who taught for many years in Calcutta, Lucknow and Patna; Deputy Minister for External Affairs, 1957-62; Minister of State for External Affairs, 1962-66.

23. To V. Chattopadhyaya¹

7 November 1928

My dear Chatto,

I have not had a letter from you for a week or two. We have been having a fairly busy time and have made some progress with the Independence for India League. I agree with you that it is not desirable at present to open a separate office to represent the League against Imperialism. The Independence for India League office will of course remain in touch with you. As a matter of fact as I am the Working Secretary of that League it really amounts to this, that I should continue writing to you frequently as before subject of course to the goodwill of our benign government. Indeed I am told that the aforesaid benign government has taken a deal of interest in me and this interest

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 39, N.M.M.I..

may develop to such an extent that I may not be able to communicate with you or anyone else for the matter of that. However that is a minor matter which need not worry us. The next month or two are likely to be very heavy ones.

I hope some representative of your League will be able to attend the Congress at Calcutta.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

24. The Imperialist Danger¹

I have much pleasure in adding a foreword to Mr. Schmidt's little book. I think Mr. Schmidt has done a needed service in drawing attention to certain facets and in removing certain misapprehensions about the League against Imperialism.

I have had the privilege of being associated with the League since its formation at the Congress held in Brussels in February 1927. I welcomed its formation because I felt that it supplied a common platform for the two great movements of revolt against the existing conditions which we have in the world today, the struggle of labour against the entrenched citadel of capital and the nationalist movements in countries under alien domination. What is there in common between these two except indeed the common factor of exploitation? Labour looks beyond national boundaries and seeks to create a cooperative world commonwealth. A narrow patriotism is not enough for it.

1. Jawaharlal's foreword to P.J. Schmidt's *The Imperialist Danger*. It was reprinted in *The Tribune*, 24 July 1929, with the following note by Jawaharlal: "The following foreword was written by me at the request of Mr. P.J. Schmidt, editor of *Recht en Vrijheid* of Amsterdam for a little book he had written called *The Imperialist Danger*. It was written more than a year ago, in May 1928. I do not know if the book has been published or not. The League against Imperialism is attracting a great deal of attention now on account of the determined attacks being made on it by the British Government. Within a week the Second World Congress of the League meets at Frankfurt in Germany. This foreword, though written more than fourteen months ago, may not be wholly out of date and may interest some people."

Nationalism, on the other hand, is necessarily limited in its outlook; it is based on an intense patriotism and territorial boundaries are sacred to it. How then can the two be reconciled and brought to march together?

And yet there is, or ought to be much in common between the two, and unless the two are harmonised and made to work together for the common good, there can be no permanent solution of the problems of the day. Can there be a world commonwealth with half the world in chains? What kind of socialism will it be, if it is based on the exploitation of other countries? Indeed can the world of labour in western countries better its lot even in the smaller field of wages and hours of work and standards of living, so long as imperialism continues and capital has full freedom to exploit the weak and unorganised labour of colonial countries and pit it against the worker at home? The independence of colonial countries is very necessary to the inhabitants of those countries, but it is clear today that it is equally necessary from the point of view of the European worker. And so both from the viewpoint of high idealism and the narrower and mundane one of self-interest, it has become the duty of the working class to combat imperialism and to help the nationalist movement of oppressed countries.

It is possible that the nationalist movement in a country under foreign domination may succeed in gaining independence without the support of labour. That may happen, as it has happened in the past, but it will result in creating a new capitalist state, nominally independent, but with little freedom for the worker. That will not bring peace any nearer or solve any of our problems.

The League against Imperialism, for the first time, saw the common factors in the two movements and wisely sought to bring them together. It tried to bring home to the European worker the need for national independence of all countries; and it placed a new vision of social equality and freedom before the somewhat narrow nationalist movements of various countries. To all, it proclaimed that imperialism was the common enemy to be fought ceaselessly and rooted out before a better order could be established.

If the League had not done any other work, it would still have justified its formation. But during the year of its existence it has already brought nearer together the various peoples of Asia and Africa struggling for freedom, and it has made them realise in some measure that there is a bond between them and the worker of the West. And gradually even national movements like the Indian National Congress, conservative in their social outlook, are beginning to look towards the socialist ideal of society.

Such is the record of the League, and yet it is an amazing thing that those who call themselves socialists should attack it and seek to injure it, and that it should be necessary for Mr. Schmidt to refute their arguments. We in India have not concerned ourselves with the rivalries and conflicts between the Second and the Third Internationals. But even a casual acquaintance with facts is enough to show us the attitude of the two towards the nationalist movements of the East. Russia has not merely given pious expression to her sympathy but has acted up to it in China, in Persia and elsewhere. What the Second International has done, or rather not done, has been well shown by Mr. Schmidt. And specially we are interested in the doings of those pillars of the Second International — the British Labour Party. They have shown us the measure of their socialism and of their belief in the oft-repeated slogan of self-determination. They have proved to us that the possession of empire injures those who profit by it as much as those who suffer under it. In their deeds they have acted as full-blooded imperialists indistinguishable from the more blatant variety belonging to the Tory Party. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's term of office as Prime Minister of England was signalised by the Bengal Ordinance under which hundreds of Indians were kept in jail without trial or charge. And now he and his party have wholeheartedly agreed and cooperated with the Simon Commission appointed by the Tory Government against the declared will of all parties and groups in India. And because there was indignant protest in India Mr. MacDonald has lost his temper and has sent us hectoring and offensive messages after the manner of the choicest imperialists of the Tory School. Labour journals in England have supported him and joined in denunciation of Indian nationalists and its leaders. Is it any wonder that Indian public opinion of all shades has seen and fully realised that under the thin veneer of an academic socialism Mr. MacDonald and his party are as much imperialists and supporters of the present capitalist system as the Baldwins and Birkenheads. Indeed we prefer the frank brutality of the latter to Mr. MacDonald's imperious and hypocritical message of goodwill.

As I write we have had yet another demonstration of the British Labour Party's attitude towards imperialism. British warships have coerced the Egyptian Parliament and people in postponing a measure entirely dealing with internal order and these men of war have carried with them the goodwill of the Labour Party. Sir Austen Chamberlain tells us that British interests as stand today will be protected "for ever", and Mr. MacDonald has acquiesced in this monstrous assertion.

I wish well to the League against Imperialism, and wishing well to it, I am glad that Messrs MacDonald and Co. are not of it but are

against it. I hope this League will never give shelter to men who talk glibly of the future socialist order and of the evils of imperialism and yet who belie their words by every action and betray their principles at every crisis.

The League is said to be a "Communist manoeuvre" and so it must be cursed with bell, book and candle. One of the organisations associated with the League is the Indian National Congress and even the leaders of the Second International should know that the Indian Congress is not a communist body, is not even as a whole socialist in its outlook, though it contains many socialists. But the Congress is not afraid as the Second International is afraid of cooperating with all forces that are anti-imperialist whether they are communist or non-communist. The Congress has no desire to have any dealings with those who merely talk and always fail at the moment of action.

From the best part of my adult years I have been associated with the Indian National Congress and I have desired the freedom of India passionately. But I believe in the socialist order of society and I trust and hope that India will evolve such an order. The League against Imperialism offers a platform for both these ideals — national independence and social equality — and all such as believe in them should surely welcome the League and help it in its great task.

GENERAL SECRETARY
A.I.C.C.

1. Presidential Address at the Fifth Session of the Hindustani Seva Dal¹

Comrades, four years ago you did me the honour of making me the President² of the first session of this conference. Now, on the occasion of the fifth session, I am placed in the same position. I propose very briefly to consider with you the results of these four years of work. I must confess that in taking stock of the results we find that they are not very encouraging. This organisation was started with the object of having a permanent body of volunteers not only for the Congress work but also for all purposes and especially to prepare the Indian youth for emergencies when any special political action was necessary. Unfortunately, during the last four years, we have not made any great progress. But at the same time, may I say that we have not been encouraged and helped sufficiently by our Congress leaders? As my predecessor has stated and the speaker who preceded me told you, we have had many Congress leaders as our patrons, but somehow or other, we have received no effective help from Congress organisations in the country. Even in Madras, today, our position is more that of outcasts than anything else.

During some of the past Congresses, we, the members of the Dal, were entrusted with the training and organisation of volunteers; and whenever we had this opportunity, we produced an efficient and trained body of young men and women. But our participation in Congress work at the time of the annual sessions has been progressively getting less and less and now in Madras we have been entirely left out in the cold. The Congress is again reverting to its old practice of enrolling at the last moment large numbers of untrained people for the work of the session and as soon as the session is over they drift back to their ordinary work and not even a nucleus of trained volunteers remains. These temporary volunteers work hard willingly and we must all be grateful to them for their service. But it is a great pity that this willing service does not fructify into a solid band of well trained volunteers. This was one of the principal objects for which our Dal was started

1. Madras, December 1927. *The Volunteer*, January-February 1928, Vol. IV. Nos. 1 and 2.

2. For Jawaharlal's speech at the first session, see *Selected Works*, Volume 2, pp. 83-86.

and it is a matter for sorrow that owing to indifferent help and encouragement from those in authority, we have made little progress in this direction.

The Constitution of the Dal was originally framed so as to make us of the Congress and yet outside the Congress in regard to our internal organisation. We bound ourselves loyally to follow the Congress creed and policy in every way that we could; but we also made it clear that we must be fully autonomous. No volunteer organisation could afford without imperilling its discipline to have outside control so far as its internal organisation was concerned. But to facilitate the fullest co-operation with provincial Congress organisation we made rules empowering provincial Congress committees to start volunteer boards. But these very rules which were meant to facilitate work have proved a hindrance as most of the provincial Congress committees have refused to take any action and we have been powerless to take any independent action in such provinces. It is necessary therefore to alter these rules so that where necessary we can go ahead even if the P.C.C. refuses to act. Some of these changes in our Constitution are also necessary to facilitate our future work.

You are aware that a great number of youth organisations have sprung up in the country and this movement is gradually spreading. The members of these organisations are not volunteers and under our rules we can only affiliate trained volunteers. But undoubtedly we have much in common with them and it would be desirable if you authorised the All India Board to cooperate whenever possible with the youth movements.

We have not succeeded in doing anything spectacular during the past few years. Our work has not been extensive, but nonetheless we have done a great deal of intensive work and we have built a solid foundation on which it would not be difficult to erect an enduring superstructure. We have learnt a great deal and our experience will stand us good in future. Our work therefore has certainly not been in vain and we can say with some confidence that with some help and encouragement from outside we can carry far the good work of building a strong volunteer organisation in our country.

The struggle for Swaraj is bound to become keener in the future and the burden of it will fall on our young men. It will be for them to face the dangers and difficulties in a spirit of courage and resolute daring. The trained members of the Dal would have a special responsibility; for a trained man is worth many untrained persons. There is danger of war and elaborate preparations are being made by the British Government on the North-West and North-East frontiers of India as

well as elsewhere. England is playing an aggressive game and while it talks of disarmament, prepares feverishly for war. Even Lord Robert Cecil, the British representative in the League of Nations, had to resign from his post as according to him England is not sincerely trying for disarmament. If war comes an attempt is bound to be made to exploit India for the benefit of England and to use her man-power and resources to further the interests of British imperialism. India must not allow herself to be made a tool of foreign imperialists and must resolutely refuse to participate in such a war without her own consent. And if she is forced into it, it will be our duty to refuse to help in any way and face the consequences whatever they may be. The volunteers must be prepared for this contingency and must clearly define their policy should such a crisis arise. It will be for them to take a lead in the country and if they do so and if the country acts courageously and wisely we shall emerge from the crisis with honour and with freedom in our grasp.

2. To Subhas Chandra Bose¹

15/3/1928

My dear Subhas,

We have been reading about the great boycott demonstrations² that you have been holding in Calcutta and elsewhere and admiring your energy. People have been writing to us also for information on the subject. Our office is however hardly in a position to supply this information. I wish you would let me have a concise note as to what you are doing and what you are definitely aiming at. You have proclaimed a boycott of British goods and specially of British clothes. Does the former mean simply a general appeal not to buy or use British goods or have you drawn up lists of particular goods which you wish to concentrate upon? Regarding the boycott of British cloth are you allowing in your scheme the sale and purchase of other foreign cloth?

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-48/1927, p. 1, N.M.M.L.

2. A campaign for the boycott of British goods started in Calcutta on 1 March 1928. 32 meetings were simultaneously held in 32 wards of the city where the message of boycott was preached. On 3 March 1928 ten thousand ladies at a meeting in Calcutta vowed to boycott British cloth.

Have you approached the wholesale and retail dealers in foreign cloth and tried to induce them to come to terms? If you wish to confine the boycott to British cloth only what steps do you propose to take to distinguish between such cloth and foreign cloth? I presume you are prepared in the future to resort to picketing.

I shall be obliged if you will kindly send me full information on these subjects. It will not only help me to understand the position in Bengal but enable us to do something on more or less similar lines elsewhere.

I am specially interested in the organisational side of the movement. The political effect of boycott propaganda is of course considerable but unless it is backed up by an efficient organisation and a well thought out scheme, the economic effect may not be marked, and after a short while there may be a reaction. I have no doubt that you must have thought out all the future steps and that you must be aiming at not merely a temporary demonstration but also at a permanent exclusion to a large extent of British cloth. I shall be thankful if you will let me know this programme of yours.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. To N.S. Hardikar¹

28 March 1928

My dear Hardikar,

I had your card of the 19th March. I am glad of the progress you are making in the construction of the Physical Culture Academy² building. But I wish you would get hold of some fat and prosperous person to do the opening ceremony. I am neither very fat nor prosperous and I am not used to such functions. But the fact is that it is very difficult for me to say definitely where I shall be on that day. And it seems to me a waste of good money and time to take this long journey for the purpose. As you know the All Parties Conference is meeting in Bombay on May 19th and I may have to be there for a

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-8/1928, p. 323, N.M.M.L.

2. Was started on 1 August 1928.

number of days in connection with it. If you happen to come to Bombay then I shall be glad to see you. It will be very difficult for me to go south again after another month. I hope you will forgive me.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. On the Boycott of Foreign Cloth¹

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that some people objected to the boycott of British goods on the ground that the present was the age of machine and the cry "back to the days of cottage industry", was futile. To this objection there were two answers. Firstly, in the countries where the industrial system was supreme, an immense discontent prevailed; it would be wise to avoid those troubles. Secondly, in India the present factories could not meet the demand of the people without being supplemented by cottage industry.

He explained the evils of industrialisation of a country and pointed out how those countries which had given up agriculture almost altogether were dependent upon other countries for their subsistence. The power of England which was completely industrialised was waning. The rising powers, according to the forecast of statesmen, were America, China and Russia, for they were self-sufficient in almost every way. It was necessary for India to oust foreign cloth and make her position secure. It was impossible to achieve this object by using mill-made cloth only. The aid of *khadi* was absolutely necessary. It was a false notion that *khadi* could not be manufactured on a large scale. It could easily keep pace with the growing demand.

Khadi alone could succeed in driving out foreign material. Mahatma Gandhi was, however, prepared to make a compromise² with the millowners. But it was necessary that the latter should cease to be unduly greedy. Mahatmaji wanted the millowners to

1. Speech at Lahore, 13 April 1928. *The Tribune*, 17 April 1928.

2. In fact, no compromise was reached.

promise not to raise the price of the cloth produced by them, exorbitantly. The latter had also to satisfy the legitimate demands of the workers. If no settlement is arrived at between Mahatmaji and the Indian millowners, it will be our plain duty to boycott mill cloth and use *khadi* only.

One-third of the cloth consumed in India is imported from abroad. Eighty per cent of this is received from Britain and the remaining twenty per cent from Japan and other countries. Foreign cloth should be boycotted and it should be replaced by means of indigenous effort.

In the near future, a big war was bound to break out. Foreign cloth will cease to be imported then on the scale on which it is being imported now. The Indian millowner will in that case get an opportunity to raise the price of his stuff. We must begin to wear *khaddar* habitually to meet the imminent danger.

5. To A. Rangaswami Iyengar¹

April 18, 1928

My dear Rangaswami,

Thank you for your letter of the 4th April. I am sorry to have to give you trouble about Mahalinga Sarma.² Perhaps I may have been a little hard on him but I have little patience left with patriots who seem to think that their stay in jail is sufficient to compensate for all their failures. I am waiting to hear from the Manager of the *Swadesamitran*, about the new arrangements made.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-13/1928, p. 145, N.M.M.L.

2. S. Mahalinga Sarma was employed in the A.I.C.C. office, and Jawaharlal had found his work unsatisfactory. On 30 March 1928 Jawaharlal wrote to him: "So far as this office is concerned I have no wish to have any one connected with it who is careless or incapable of doing his work properly."

6. To Secretaries of Provincial Congress Committees¹

Allahabad
June 8th, 1928

Dear Sir,

I have very recently had occasion to visit the Karnatak Province and of inspecting on the spot the organisation of the Hindustani Seva Dal. I visited one of their camps and also saw a new academy of physical culture which is being built at Bagalkot. I was considerably impressed by what I saw. The young boys that have been through some course of training — from the age of 7 upwards — were a fine straight-backed and disciplined lot, and did credit to the Seva Dal. I could not help thinking that if there were a larger number of such training centres in India we would soon have a great number of these disciplined and trained youths.

The Seva Dal has also helped greatly in Congress work, specially in enrolling Congress members. It is now building an academy of physical culture at Bagalkot to give special facilities for training selected persons from all over India. This academy will be opened on August 1st and I am informed by the Secretary of the Seva Dal that he will welcome representatives of the provincial Congress committees at the opening ceremony. It is proposed to have a rally of 500 trained members of the Dal at the time of the opening ceremony.

The Seva Dal may train a few persons in distant centres but it can carry on effective work in any province only by working on the spot. If provincial committees are interested they can easily make arrangements for the training through their provincial bands or through the headquarters of the Seva Dal.

I trust that P.C.Cs will take full advantage of the services of the Seva Dal and will thus build up a trained band of disciplined volunteers in each province.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-8/1928, p. 279, N.M.M.I.

7. To the Congressmen of Kerala¹

10 June 1928

Dear ...,

On my return from a brief tour in Kerala I have been trying to sum up my experiences of your province. I feel that there is a great deal of room for substantial political work there. The material is good but unhappily there is no proper organisation functioning. I have no doubt that with a little effort a great deal can be done. If only a few persons take some interest in the matter they can change the whole face of the province. You will permit me therefore to make one or two suggestions.

Political work depends on workers and money, apart of course from the will to work. I think you have a few workers at least provided some funds are forthcoming so that the immediate problem before you should be one of funds. The essential thing about political work is its continuity. We may have periods of intense activity but what really tells in the end is continuous work even though this may be on a small scale. Gradually this creates an impression of permanence and the people respond to it in a large measure. Therefore it is necessary for you, to begin with, to see to it that your provincial Congress office and your district Congress offices should function regularly and should be in constant touch with their members. I was told that owing to lack of funds it is difficult sometimes to spend money even on postage. This of course is the surest way of killing an organisation. It is essential for constant touch to be maintained by Congress offices with their members and it is also essential for Congress offices to function continuously. I would therefore suggest to you that an attempt might be made to put your provincial Congress committee and district Congress committee offices on a running basis. This does not require much money or much energy but a minimum income must be guaranteed for it. Larger collections may be made for special objects. But for the daily work of the Congress there should be fixed monthly income. I would suggest a monthly income of Rs. 200/- for P.C.C. and Rs. 50/- for each D.C.C.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(ii)/1928, pp. 130-131, N.M.M.L.

This is not much and a few friends can give monthly donation of Rs. 5/- or Rs. 10/- to make up this amount. As a matter of fact, every political organisation in the West takes large contribution from its members and if we are at all keen on Congress work the very least that we can do is to provide some funds for it. This monthly income will of course not be enough for any special effort. For that special funds will have to be raised. For the present however I would suggest that an effort be made to ensure this monthly income. The P.C.C. certainly and if possible the D.C.Cs should have paid assistant secretaries to carry on the work from day to day.

This arrangement has been adopted in some cases with happy results and I trust that in Kerala you and other friends will help in this way and stabilise Congress work.

I am sending a small sum of Rs. 50/- to the Secretary of your P.C.C. as a contribution towards any fund that you may raise for Congress work in the province. This is a trivial sum but it represents my goodwill and affection for your beautiful province.

Will you permit me to thank you for your kindness and courtesy to me during my visit to Kerala.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. To M. Annapurniah¹

11 June 1928

Dear Sir,²

I have your letter of the 4th June. I wish you success in your issuing a special number of the *Congress* on the occasion of the birthday of Sitaramaraju.³ I do not know much about Sitaramaraju but from what

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(ii)/1928, p. 127, N.M.M.L.

2. A Congressman from Andhra, and editor of a newspaper, *Congress*, published at Seetanagram in East Godavari district.

3. Alluri Sitaramaraju; a leader of a tribal revolt against the British in the agency tracts of Godavari and Visakhapatnam districts from 1922 to 1924, when he was killed. He became a hero in Andhra, and his 32nd birthday was to be commemorated in 1928.

I have heard about him it appears that he was an extraordinarily brave and daring individual and that his main objective was the freedom of his country. These qualities must command respect and admiration.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

9. To the Editor, Mysore Patriot¹

Allahabad
26 June 1928

Sir,

A friend has sent me a cutting from the *Mysore Patriot* containing an article on "Disciplined Volunteers". This article refers to a letter I had issued to Congress committees recommending the formation of branches of the Hindustani Seva Dal to train volunteers. The conclusions you have drawn from this letter of mine are such, however, as to take my breath away. I have been criticised and accused of many things in the past. But so far as I am aware no one has yet charged me with love for the British Empire. I am afraid you could not have followed closely the politics of the Indian National Congress or its allied organisations like the Seva Dal, if you laboured under the impression that any of them worked for the glorification of the British Empire or for the consolidation of this empire. So far as I am personally concerned I am convinced that the British Empire has done and is doing more harm to the world than any other organisation. Few things would please me more than the liquidation of this empire. And I hope to have this pleasure before very long.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Hardikar Papers, N.M.M.L.

A newspaper published from Mysore city.

10. To Vahid Yar Khan¹

4 July 1928

Dear Mr. Vahid Yar Khan,²

I have your letters. I agree with you about your idea of sympathetic strikes³ but it is not very easy to bring them about. The repeated attempts in Europe have so far not succeeded. Of course if they can act it would be an excellent thing.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(ii)/1928, p. 95, N.M.M.I.

2. Editor, *New Light*, Calcutta.

3. To express sympathy and support for the Lilloah railway workers strike in Bengal, Vahid Yar Khan had written to the Bengal Trade Union Federation suggesting that they organise workers in other fields to strike in sympathy with the strike at Lilloah.

11. On the Inauguration of the Physical Culture Academy, Bagalkot¹

The date has been well chosen.² It is a most auspicious day and it should remind us of one who more than any other laid the foundations of our fight for freedom, and who has left for the Indian people a shining example of courage and self-sacrifice. On that day also was launched the noncooperation movement. It is well that this date has been chosen so that the members and associates of the Seva Dal may draw inspiration from the genius and life work of a great countryman, and may always remember the gallant days when the masses of India asserted their right to freedom and came near to achieving it. I wish the Academy every success and those who have the good fortune to study there every opportunity to put their knowledge and efficiency to the test in the service of the Motherland.

1. *The Volunteer*, July-August, 1928.

2. 1 August, the anniversary of Tilak's death.

12. To N.S. Hardikar¹

August 24, 1928

My dear Hardikar,

I have your letter of the 19th August. I have carefully considered the resolution which the Karnataka Conference passed. I am not quite sure that I agree with it. I appreciate that in a military organisation frequent changes should not be made. Thus the same office-bearers should, as far as possible, continue. But this does not necessarily mean that you should elect them for a long term of years. If a person is eminently suited for an office he will be elected again and again. I think there is some slight danger of the organisation becoming stiff-backed with semi-permanent officials who cannot easily be removed.

It may be desirable to separate the function of the President of the Dal from that of the President of the conference. The President of the conference should obviously be elected every year. The President of the Dal may be elected every two or three years. I should not lengthen the period beyond three years in any event. So also the Secretary and the Treasurer. About the others I think we should adhere to annual election.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-8/1928, p. 129, N.M.M.L.

13. On the Dal¹

Every year during the sessions of the National Congress volunteers are enrolled to preserve order in that great assembly and to perform a hundred and one acts of special service. But the exigencies of the moment seldom permit the training of these volunteers to any large extent. There are also many other organisations of volunteers in various parts of India, some affiliated to political organisations and others devoted to

1. *The Volunteer*, August 1928.

social work only. But with a few exceptions proper training is seldom given to them.

During the noncooperation days large bodies of volunteers sprang up in their thousands in the cities and villages of India. Their purpose was chiefly to defy various orders passed by the British Government and to court jail. As is well known, many thousands of these young men and women did go to jail and although the jails were filled to overflowing, there was no lack of aspirants for the honour of entering them in the service of the country's cause. But with the suspension of some parts of the noncooperation programme, those organisations broke up. There had been no training and there was no cohesive force to keep them together.

It was felt by many that the old methods of enrolling volunteers were wasteful of energy and enthusiasm as the same process had to be repeated again and again without establishing any substantial results. The lack of proper training resulted in want of efficiency and still more so in the temporary volunteers forgetting very soon what little they had learnt. In spite of repeated attempts there were hardly any well trained volunteers and disciplined body of men and women in the country. We had always laid stress on numbers and enthusiasm and not on training and efficiency. But enthusiasm is often wasted unless controlled and properly directed; and numbers are often a hindrance unless they are disciplined and know how to cooperate with each other. With intelligent cooperation and discipline, two and two make more than four. Without cooperation two and two may cancel each other and may make zero.

It was therefore considered necessary to start a new All India Organisation with the object of giving this training and discipline and building up an efficient body of men and women for national service and whenever necessary for disciplined sacrifice for the attainment of Swaraj.

With a view to give effect to this proposal an All India Volunteer Conference was held in Cocanada in December 1923, during the sessions of the Indian National Congress. Out of the deliberations of this conference the Hindustani Seva Dal saw the light of day.

The Seva Dal was formed as an All India Organisation "to train and organise the people of India for National Service and disciplined sacrifice with a view to the attainment of Swaraj by peaceful and legitimate means," and "to control and bring under uniform discipline all the existing volunteer organisations and to establish new ones wherever and whenever necessary." An All India Board of twelve members was also elected to form the Executive of the Dal.

The Cocanada Sessions of the National Congress welcomed the for-

mation of the Dal and passed the following resolutions in regard to it:-

"This Congress is of opinion that in order to train the people of India and make them effective instruments for carrying out of the national work on the lines laid down by the Congress, it is necessary to have a trained and disciplined body of workers. This Congress, therefore, welcomes the movement for the formation of an All India Volunteer Organisation and calls upon the Working Committee to take all necessary steps to form such a body of trained workers in cooperation with the organisers of the movement and to keep control and supervision over it while giving it freedom of internal management and administration."

The Seva Dal is thus a fully autonomous body but it is affiliated to the National Congress and in matters of general policy it follows the lead of the Congress.

The Seva Dal has since continued to function and annual conferences have been held during the Congress sessions. Many training camps have been organised where an attempt has been made to give a thorough training to groups of boys and young men. The Dal has full members, both men and women associates, and there is a junior section for boys and girls. Full courses of training and camp regulations have been issued.

The object of the Dal is to train as many men and women and boys and girls as possible without interfering with their ordinary occupations. Thus courses of training can be taken advantage of in any city or rural area, wherever there is a group desirous of having it, in the evenings or at any other time. Students in schools or colleges can easily take a course without detriment to their studies. For the full training it is desirable, however, to go to a camp and live the life of a camp for at least two or three months. These camps can be arranged during vacation time or at any other time suitable to a group. The Seva Dal has already trained a body of instructors and it is always glad to lend the service of one of its instructors to any group desirous of training.

The Seva Dal has, in addition to an All India Board, Provincial Boards also, elected annually. Its trained members can form themselves into groups of different sizes and special designations.

The Dal works in cooperation with the provincial Congress organisations. It also gladly cooperates with the youth leagues² or other organisations in the country desiring its services for the training of their members.

2. After the Youth Congress in Madras in December 1927 a number of youth leagues were formed all over India and various conferences were held.

The encouragement of physical culture is an important part of the Dal's activities. For this purpose, an Academy of Physical Culture has been started at Bagalkot in Karnatak. This Academy is open to people from all parts of India. It is hoped, as soon as funds are available, to start similar academies in other parts of the country.

The Executive of the Seva Dal feels that the work which they have the honour to be charged with is of great importance. It is the essence of nation building, and though it may be laborious and slow, it is sure to and must bear fruit. They confidently appeal, therefore, for the co-operation of all who are interested in increasing the efficiency of the Indian people and in training and organising them for national service. The work costs money. The greater the funds at the disposal of the Seva Dal, the greater the service it can render to the country. Donations will therefore be welcomed and thankfully received.

The Headquarters of the Seva Dal are situated at Hubli in Karnatak. Enquiries which will be gladly attended to and other communications should be addressed to Dr. N.S. Hardikar, General Secretary, Hindustani Seva Dal, Hubli (Karnatak).

14. To Syed Mahmud¹

Mussoorie

14 September 1928

My dear Mahmud,

...I do not know anything about the rumour that government is going to prosecute me. I believe Zafar Ali² started it. I do not think there is any foundation for it...

Love

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

2. Zafar Ali Khan (1870-1956); editor of the *Zamindar*.

Zafar Ali Khan had informed the press that Jawaharlal was expected to be arrested soon for inaugurating the Independence for India League.

15. To M.A. Ansari¹

September 21, 1928

My dear Ansari,

I received your telegram about the A.I.C.C. meeting last night on my return to Allahabad from Mussoorie. Your instructions will be carried out and the meeting will be fixed for the 20th. It is just possible however that the Calcutta people may refuse to take the responsibility of arranging for the meeting on the eve of the *Durga Puja*. If this happens would you like the meeting to be held elsewhere? I am going to Calcutta today and shall consult Subhas, Sen-Gupta² and others. If everything is fixed up I shall not wire to you. Otherwise I shall wire to you from there.

I enclose a letter I am sending to the Secretary of the Congress Assembly Party. I must say that I have been greatly shocked at reading the decision of this party regarding attendance at Viceregal receptions. If this is the result of the All Parties report and conference it seems to me that the sooner we scrap the report and break up the conference the better. It is obvious that the Congress contains at least two if not more groups which have nothing in common between them and the sooner they break apart the better. The crisis is likely to come at the next meeting of the A.I.C.C. I shall return from Calcutta on the 26th. My address there will be care of Subhas.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-60/1928-29, p. 39, N.M.M.L.

2. J. M. Sen Gupta (1885-1933); first met Jawaharlal at Cambridge in 1907; a barrister of Calcutta who suspended legal practice in 1921 and succeeded Das in 1925 as president, Bengal provincial Congress committee; leader of the Swaraj Party and Mayor of Calcutta; acting president of the Congress, October 1930.

16. To Mahatma Gandhi¹

Allahabad

14.11.28

My dear Bapuji,

Shankarlal² writes to me that he has sent you a letter I wrote to him some days ago. I do not know if I made my meaning clear in this letter. I suggested to him that for various reasons it would be desirable for the A.I.S.A.³ Council to have a more competent person than myself as agent in the U.P. I am painfully conscious of the fact that I am not much of a success there — partly because of my inability to go deeply into accounts and partly because of other occupations. I did not mean that I want to get rid of the responsibility or the work. I shall gladly carry on and do what I can. But if it is possible to make better arrangements I shall welcome them.

I cannot suggest many names. The only person I can think of in the U.P. is Kripalani. He is practically a U.P. man now, is well known in *khadi* circles here and is a wholtimer. It would have been a good thing if he was made the agent for both the U.P. and Delhi. This would result perhaps in better coordination between the Gandhi Ashram and the U.P. dept. of the A.I.S.A. I am not sure however how far this suggestion is practicable at present.

There is no immediate hurry in this matter. I wanted the A.I.S.A. Council to consider it largely in view of the rumours of my impending arrest. But I do not think anything of this kind is going to happen this year.

Kamala has been giving us a great deal of anxiety. Not because she is in any critical state but she is generally much weaker and liable to all manner of pains and troubles. We propose to take her to Calcutta for treatment.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

1. Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 12787.

2. Shankarlal Banker.

3. All India Spinners' Association.

17. To Mahatma Gandhi¹

Allahabad

24.11.28

My dear Bapuji,

Thank you for your letter. I shall of course carry on to the best of my ability with the A.I.S.A. work. I have no desire to leave it. But I felt a little overwhelmed with various kinds of activities and thought that I was not doing justice to the A.I.S.A. Sitla Sahai's departure for a lengthy period made matters worse and hence I wrote to Shankarlal.

I am being dragged willy nilly to this municipality.² For the last six months or more I have resisted and refused but the facts are too strong for me and I have had to give a conditional consent. It may be that I am elected the Chairman in a week or so. This is not a prospect which cheers me up. I like municipal work but the present state of our municipality is so bad that a tremendous deal of work is required.

I should very much like to come to Wardha for the A.I.S.A. meeting. I shall try to do so but I doubt if I shall succeed. Anyway I hope to see you in Calcutta. The papers announce that you are going to Mysore in December.

It is obvious that Kamala did not get cured in Europe. She is tolerably well at present but is very weak. She will go to Calcutta and may stay there some time for treatment.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

1. Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 13734.

2. Jawaharlal was again involved in Allahabad municipal politics, but was defeated by one vote in a contest for the Chairmanship.

CALL TO YOUTH

1. Address at Indian Youth Conference¹

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who hoisted the Youth Flag at the opening of this conference said that when he glanced over the aims and objects of the youth movement, he found that one of the rules of the organisation was that it was a non-political one. He did not know whether at this present juncture any of their organisations would be a live one if it was non-political. The speaker was aggressively political and he did not know why he was asked to participate in that function. He would, however, ask them to remember that youth meant that it was standing for progress, rebellion and action and not passive inactivity. He desired that the youth of the country should not be looking back to the glorious past of their motherland, but should always look forward. The difference between old age and youth was that while the former would always be thinking of its achievements and sufferings in the past, the latter would think of the crowded hours that lay ahead of them. Again the meaning of youth was that it stood for inquiry, criticism and rebellion of the mind and the spirit. He hoped that they would interpret the object of their movement in that spirit. All the world over, a spirit of enquiry and search was animating youth and he hoped that the youth flag he was going to hoist would remind them of their duties.

1. Summary of Jawaharlal's address to the second session of the Indian Youth Conference at Madras, 23 December 1927. *The Volunteer*, December 1927.

2. An Appeal to Youth¹

18 March 1928

Sir,

Ever since my return from Europe eleven weeks ago I have seen and felt a new awakening in the youth of India. After long suppression the

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 12/1928, pp. 325-327, N.M.M.L.

This letter was published in all the leading nationalist newspapers.

spirit or youth is up in arms against all forms of authoritarianism and is seeking an outlet in many ways and in many directions. Youth leagues have sprung up in all parts of the country and individual young men and young women, weary of the continual and barren strife of many of their elders, are groping for a path which might lead them to a fuller realisation of themselves, a better and more prosperous India and a happier world. They are beginning to realise that communalism is the very negation of what we should strive for and the attempts that are made to remove this canker from our body politic, well meant as they are and sometimes productive of good results, seldom touch the roots of the problem.

It is felt by many that religion, as preached and practised in India, has become a grave danger to the State and octopus-like it spreads its tentacles into every department of life whether it is political, economic or social. The rules and regulations laid down in a bygone age and for an entirely different society are sought to be applied now in all their rigidity to modern life and conditions, with the inevitable result that there is a hiatus, and friction and unhappiness are the common lot of life in India. Like the old man of the sea, religion has mounted our backs and effectively prevents all progress and advancement. Religion was not meant to be this and if it continues to encroach on other departments of life, the reaction may engulf it utterly.

Thinking men and women, and the young specially, cannot help being distressed at the present inequalities between man and man, class and class. Gross and vulgar luxury on the one side and abject misery on the other must produce in all who are sensitive and those who themselves suffer under the existing system, a feeling of intense bitterness and revolt. The present system has been admittedly a failure and is condemned. As to what should take its place opinions differ but whatever it may be it should provide for the removal of, or at any rate tend to remove, inequalities of class and caste and wealth. It should result in equal opportunities for everyone and not the grossly unfair lack of opportunities which is the lot of most people today.

These are the two avenues along which the thought of many people in India is moving today, and a necessary corollary to them is that India must be fully independent to work along the lines of her own choosing.

Many young friends, Hindu and Muslim, have spoken and written to me on these lines and have expressed a desire for an organisation based on these fundamental ideas. We have many organisations already and I am not at all sure that an addition to them is called for. But that depends on the number of people who agree with these ideas and are prepared to cooperate with each other to realise them. In any event

it is worthwhile for those who agree on these general principles to get into touch with each other. It will be open to them then to consider whether they should have a loosely-knit or a compact organisation, or none at all.

I would therefore beg of those who generally agree with what has been said above to write to me, making such other suggestions as they may consider necessary. To recapitulate, this appeal is addressed to those who:

- 1— believe in full independence for India,
- 2— think that religion should be a purely personal matter with each individual and should not be permitted to interfere with the consideration of political, economic and social questions and especially that communalism should be fought in all its aspects,
- 3— desire to remove inequalities of caste, class and wealth, and wish that there should be an equality of opportunity for every one.

Letters should be addressed to me to Anand Bhawan, Allahabad.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. To K. Venkatachari¹

March 28, 1928

Dear Mr. Venkatachari²,

I have your letter of the 24th March. I am very glad to learn that there is a chance of the youth delegation going to attend the World Youth Congress in Holland. I am afraid however that it is wholly impossible for me to go with the delegation. This is not because I consider the claims of youth on me of secondary importance. I believe in youth movements so much that I am prepared to sacrifice all other work to the organisation of youth in India. I feel however that I will serve that purpose much better by remaining in India at present and not by going on a delegation. You know I have only recently returned from Europe after a long stay and it is not right for me to rush back.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. O-3/1928 (Pt. 1), p. 65, N.M.M.L.

2. General Secretary, the Indian Youth Congress and Secretary, Young India Party, Madras at this time.

I had a letter from a young friend in Madras suggesting that I should issue an appeal for funds for a youth delegation. I wrote to him that if an All India delegation is sent an all India appeal should be made, but for a provincial delegation, funds should be raised in the province concerned.

I do not think that large funds are necessary. Members of the delegation can travel third class by the French steamers sailing from Colombo. I do not know if there is third class accommodation in the boats going from Bombay. Even second class accommodation in some boats is not expensive. Inquiries might be made from tourist agencies like Thomas Cook or the American Express.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To Jahangir Vakil¹

April 5th, 1928

Dear Mr. Vakil,²

Thank you for your letter of the 2nd April. I remember you very well and you need not have refreshed my memory.

I agree with a great deal of what you have said. It is obvious that if the caste system is an eternal thing no question of changing our social organisation can arise. No one who believes in the caste system as such can possibly accept the second or the third principle³ I have mentioned. Nor do I agree with the dictum that a son must necessarily follow his father's profession. If we form an organisation it is certainly necessary to be very clear and definite although giving of details often confuses the issue. Some kind of discipline also is necessary. All these problems however will arise after we have some idea of the members in the organisation. Personally I would rather start with a small number

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 12/1928, p. 247, N.M.M.L.

2. (1898-1970); an Oxford graduate who after working for five years as professor of English at Santiniketan, started the Pupil's Own School in Poona.

3. See appeal dated 18 March 1928, pp. 179-181 *ante*.

than a big unwieldy one. A select body of men and women clear in their minds as to the objective is obviously better than an inchoate mass.

As regards the possibility of a conflict with the Congress this may certainly result. If it does, it will mean that a member of the organisation must not be a responsible officer of the Congress. There is nothing to prevent him from being a member of the Congress and putting forward his viewpoint there. Indeed the organisation should try to convert the Congress to its views.

I do not think that an avowed communalist can have any possible place in the organisation. But perhaps you mean a member of the Communist Party. I presume that such a person would be entitled to join the organisation as also a moderate socialist. I doubt however if a person who does not believe in socialism will have a place there. I am not aware of members of the Liberal Party working for the removal of inequalities of caste and wealth.

Regarding the cow question I imagine that it is open to anyone to discuss its economic aspect. But to make of this a fetish in the name of religion would certainly go against the second principle which I stated.

A weekly or a fortnightly newspaper would be of great help. But I have no funds in view and till they are forthcoming it is difficult to entertain the idea.

I have written to you rather hurriedly and not as fully as I should have desired. I am leaving for the Punjab and hope to be back within two weeks. I am returning your letter as desired.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. Circular Letter to Congressmen¹

Allahabad
April 5th, 1928

Dear Friend,

The letter I wrote to a number of newspapers suggesting the formation of a new organisation based on three principles, which I stated, has

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 12/1928, pp. 321-323, N.M.M.L.

evoked a considerable response from all parts of the country. It is not possible for me at this stage to write to each one of my correspondents separately. You will therefore forgive me, I hope, if I send this general acknowledgement. I hope to write individually later when I have a little more time.

I find however from the answers received that there is a great deal of misapprehension about the third principle that I had mentioned. About independence and the removal of religion from our public activities there is full comprehension and appreciation.

The third principle dealt with the removal of all barriers of caste and class and the establishment, as far as possible, of a society in which there was an equality of opportunity for all. This raises partly the religious issue, in so far as the caste system results in degrading and suppressing various groups in the community. But the chief question which has to be considered in this connection is the exploitation of various classes by one or more dominant groups under the present capitalist system. In other words it raises the issue of socialism versus capitalism. Socialism is a vague term which covers many theories but it is needless to enter into them at this stage. It is generally agreed however that it means the nationalisation of the means of production and distribution so that the whole state may benefit by them and individuals may not seek to amass huge fortunes by the exploitation and impoverishment of others. It means the organisation of the State on a vast cooperative basis so that all avoidable waste, which is so much in evidence in the present state of society, may be prevented. It means friendly cooperation with other countries, not with the desire to exploit one for the benefit of another, but to the mutual advantage of all, so that finally wars may be put an end to and a great world cooperative commonwealth may be built up.

This will necessarily raise questions of labour versus capital and landlord versus tenant. We must have clear ideas about them and not try to shirk their solution because we fear opposition. The immediate programme may be a limited one, but the final goal must be clear and ever kept in view. To raise conflict where there is none is most undesirable, but to refuse to recognise it or face it when it already exists, is not wisdom and does not bring us any nearer solution.

I suggested a doubt in my letter to the press about the formation of a new organisation. As a matter of fact I had not the least doubt about it, but I wanted to sound others. The organisation is certainly needed but it must consist of people who agree on the fundamental problems of modern life. A small organisation, well-knit and clear in its own mind of the path to be pursued, will go far. A large unwieldy

body consisting of diverse elements and ever in doubt of its policy is likely to remain, as so many of our organisations remain, in a state of suspended animation.

I trust you agree with the views I have expressed in this letter. If you disagree I shall be glad to hear from you. I hope to address you again after some time.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. On the Mission of Youth¹

I have visited many foreign countries, and everywhere I found this kind of talk about each country being a chosen country with a special mission. I found it in England where Englishmen regard themselves as chosen by God to civilise the earth. I found it among the French with their invincible pride talking about a mission of France. You have heard about German *Kultur*.

Russia says she has a special task in solving the world problem. It strikes me as all very curious. Frankly I do not believe in it. No country, however great, can be regarded as a chosen country or a race of chosen people. Historically countries have grown great at one time and have taken dominating roles in shaping world destinies. Apart from that there is nothing chosen about them. And I regard it as a dangerous way of looking at it.

Then there is good deal of talk about difference between East and West. I confess I fail to see it. China and India differ in their habits, customs and outlook from each other as much as they differ from any western country but they are grouped together as against Europe. There is much difference between Europe and Asia today because Europe is industrialised and Asia is not. Europe of the Middle Ages was much the same as Asia of the Middle Ages. And I see no particular

1. Speech at a students meeting at Bombay, 20 May 1928. *The Tribune*, 22 May 1928.

reason to pride ourselves on our peculiarities, angularities and insularities. I always feel irritated when anybody talks of our immortal past. I am not unconscious of the greatness of our past. But when I study our later history and survey our present condition I see very little of the chosen people about us.

Much is said about the superiority of our religion, art, music and philosophy. But what are they today? Your religion has become a thing of the kitchen, as to what you can eat, and what you cannot eat, as to whom you can touch, and whom you cannot touch, whom you could see and whom not.

What is our music? Our national music is nothing more than infernal din and painful noises which are a nuisance on our roads. Even this sometimes assumes communal aspects and not infrequently results in deplorable tragedies. What is our art? What is there that is beautiful in the homes of our countrymen? Why, even in your own homes? What is India's national literature? As far as I know, much of what goes under the name of modern literature in Hindi and Urdu is sloppish and soppy.

Indian civilisation today is stagnant. It is the duty of youth to convert this stagnant pool into a moving stream. The test of youth is action, rebellion in every sphere. Every youth must rebel. Not only in the political sphere but in social, economic and religious spheres also. I have not much use for any man who comes and tells me that such and such thing is said in *Koran*. Everything unreasonable must be discarded even if they find authority for it in the *Vedas* and in *Koran*. I know there are difficulties in pursuing this path but these difficulties are infinitely better than inaction.

Looking at the present conditions everywhere we see that fear is the dominating feeling. It is so in Europe. Everybody is afraid of everybody else. And they are going on arming themselves in the fear that somebody would attack them. It is the same in India. Every group, every community was afraid of the other, each thought that at the next opportune moment the other would swallow it. That was the reason why at the All Parties Conference yesterday we found each community not only asking for its just rights but bargaining for a dominant position, as each community felt that that was the only way in which it could ensure its existence. This feeling of want of security must go. If Indian youth must achieve India's destiny it must be in the words of the great leader of the French Revolution, "daring and daring and still more daring".

7. To the Editor, *Abhyudaya*¹

Dear Sir,

Sri Gauri Shankar Misra seems to have been highly offended by certain words of mine, alleged to have been spoken at a students gathering² in Bombay. Had he seen the correct report of my speech, his opposition might not have been so vehement. I had spoken so fast and so hurriedly that my words were reported in a distorted form in the newspapers.

I do not wish to take up precious time and space by repeating what I had said at Bombay. At the same time, I do wish to remove certain misunderstandings. If our differences persist even after this, it will be my misfortune.

At the Bombay meeting I said that creative ability is generally not to be met with in Indian life today. Laxity and inertia have crept in and generally, after this, comes stagnation. I said nothing about the "superior glory of the Vedic religion", but I did say that, in spite of a promising beginning, as far as the masses were concerned, religion was now confined to mere taboos and rituals. And music has now come to mean the reproduction of deafening noises made in the processions brought out to commemorate that great tragedy³ that occurred in Arabia 1300 years ago.

It is well known that there are many great thinkers and philosophers among us and that our music is highly developed and scientific. But only a few understand these subtleties of music and religion; the common man is indifferent to them. Even the few outstanding persons among us rarely invent new things. Very often we carry on the ideas of our ancestors. Unless we have the energy and enthusiasm to generate new ideas, mental inertia is inevitable and we shall be unable to progress.

At no time have I said that there is no beauty in Indian homes. What I did say was that the lurid publications of Germany and Austria were far too popular in middle class Indian homes. I had definitely said that modern Urdu and Hindi literature were quite worthless. I

1. *Abhyudaya*, 30 June 1928. Original in Hindi.

2. See *ante* item 6.

3. Imam Husain, grandson of the Prophet, and 72 of his followers were killed at Karbala by the army of Yazid, the ruler of Arabia.

quite agree with Sri Misra that my knowledge of these two literatures is very limited. This I had already declared in my Bombay speech. But, even at this age I have maintained my habit of reading, perhaps more than many, and I am not entirely ignorant of the literary trends of various countries. I shall be glad if Sri Gauri Shankarji could suggest names of a few Hindi and Urdu books, the study of which might alter my ideas on the subject.

Sri Gauri Shankar Misra need not have talked of the Indians of today and bygone days as he has done—for, what I had specifically said was that in spite of a glorious past we had come to such a pass. Fortunately, even now we have several great men among us and, had it not been for the fatal effect of foreign domination, India would have had many more Gandhis and Tagores. It is easy to object to ordinary sentences and, if taken in the usual sense, my sentences may be easily repudiated. Everyone knows that there are many revivalist movements going on in India today. But the deep-rooted narrow-mindedness of years will not be ended as long as there is foreign domination. Independence is therefore needed, and for this we must relentlessly attack that which has enmeshed us in the chains of antiquity.

I wish to state that Gauri Shankar Misra is mistaken in the idea that I was born in England. I have been told by persons, who should be considered reliable in this matter, that it was in the holy city of Prayag that I first beheld this world.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. Presidential Address at the All-Bengal Students Conference¹

Young men and women of Bengal,

You have done me honour in inviting me to preside over this gathering of the youth of Bengal, and I am grateful for it. But I have wondered what you wished me to say or do, what kind of message to deliver. I have no special message and you know well that I am no weaver of

1. Calcutta, 22 September 1928. *The Searchlight*, 28 September 1928.

the fine phrases or trafficker in eloquence. To Bengal, justly known for her warm-hearted eloquence and love of art and beauty and passionate emotionalism, you have invited a dweller from the colder and sometimes much hotter regions of the north, whose ancestors came not so very long ago from the barren and snow-covered mountains that overlook the vast Indian plain, and I am afraid I carry with me something of the coldness and hardness of that mountain climate. A very great leader of Bengal² and of our country, whose memory we revere today, once called me very justly "cold-blooded." I plead guilty to the charge, and since you have taken the risk of inviting me you will have to bear with my cold-bloodedness.

I have begun by drawing your attention to certain minor differences between us, a Kashmiri settled in the heart of Hindustan, which is now called the United Provinces, and the residents of Bengal—and yet you all know how unimportant these differences are and how strong are the common bonds that tie us—the bonds of a common legacy from the past, of common suffering and the hope of building up a great future for this country of yours and mine. And, indeed, you can carry the comparison a little farther across the artificial frontiers that separate country from country. We are told of vital differences of race and character. Such differences there undoubtedly are but how many of them are purely accidental due to climate and environment and education and how liable to change they are. You will find that the common bond is greater and more vital than the differences, though many of us may not realize the fact.

It is realisation of the common bond of humanity that has given rise to the great youth movement of today. Many of you may be too young to remember the despair and feeling of revolt in the minds of youth during, and specially after, the Great War. Old men sat in their comfortable cabinets and banking houses and hid their selfishness and greed and lies under a cover of fine phrases and appeals for freedom and democracy. And the young, believing in these fine phrases, went out by the millions to face death, and few returned. Seventy millions of them were mobilised and of the fifteen millions that actually served on the front, over eight millions died and over five-and-a-half million were maimed for life. Think of these terrible figures and then remember that they were all young men with their lives stretching out in front of them and their hopes unfulfilled! And what did this awful sacrifice bring forth? A peace of violence and an aggravation of all the ills that the world was suffering from. You remember well that the first fruits

of the peace in India were the Rowlatt Act and Martial Law. You know also how the fine principle of self-determination, which the Allies shouted from the house-tops, has been applied to India and to other countries. A new cloak for the greed of the imperialist powers was created in the shape of mandates and in awarding mandates the "principal consideration" was to be the preference of the inhabitants. This preference was shown unaccountably by rebellion against the British in Mesopotamia and rebellion against the French in Syria. But the aeroplane and the bomb was the British answer in Iraq and the ancient and beautiful city of Damascus was reduced to ruins³ by the French. In Europe itself the peace created far more problems than it solved.

Is it any wonder that the youth of the world rebelled and cast out their old-time leaders on whom even the terrible lesson of the war was lost, and who still went on intriguing in the old way, and prepared for yet another and a greater war? Youth set about organising itself and set out to find the ways and means of establishing an order of society which would put an end to the misery and conflicts of today.

And so the youth of the world probed deeper into the cause of present-day misery. They studied the economic and the social conditions of the people, and they saw that although science and the changes that science had brought, had in a few generations covered the track of centuries, the minds of men still lagged behind the thought in terms of a dead past. Science had made the world international and interdependent, but national rivalries continued and resulted in war. Science had vastly increased production and there was enough for all and to spare but poverty continued and the contrasts between luxury and misery were more marked than ever before. But if mankind is foolish and errs, facts do not adapt themselves to errors and the world of our imagination conflicts with the world of reality; and is it any wonder that chaos and misery result?

Facts are not to blame for this. The troubles and the difficulties lie rooted in things, in our misconception of them and our misinterpretation of them. Our elders fail frequently because they are rigid in their minds and unable to change their mental outlook or adapt themselves to changing facts. But youth is not hidebound. Youth can think and is not afraid of the consequences of thought. Do not imagine that thought is an easy matter or that its consequences are trivial. Thought is not or should not be afraid of the wrath of heaven or the terrors of hell. It is the most revolutionary thing on earth. And it is because youth dare think and dare act that it holds out the promise of taking

3. The French twice bombarded Damascus in 1925 to put down a revolt.

out this country and this world of ours from the ruts and the mire in which they have sunk.

Are you, young men and women of Bengal, going to dare to think and dare to act? Are you prepared to stand shoulder to shoulder with the youth of the world, not only to free your country from an insolent and alien rule but also to establish in this unhappy world of ours a better and a happier society? That is the problem before you and if you wish to face it sincerely and fearlessly, you will have to make up your mind to rid yourselves and your country of every obstacle in your path whether it is placed by our alien rulers or has the prestige of ancient custom.

You must have your ideal clear-cut before you. How else can you hope to build the great structure of your dream? Can you build a palace on the foundations of a mud-hut, or a fine bridge with straw? With definite ideas of your goal you will gain clearness of purpose and effectiveness of action and each step that you take will carry you nearer to your heart's desire.

What shall this ideal be? National independence and perfect freedom to develop on the lines of our own choosing is the essential requisite of all progress. Without it there can be no political, economic or social freedom. But national independence should not mean for us merely an addition to the warring groups of nations. It should be a step towards the creation of a world commonwealth of nations in which we can assist in the fullest measure to bring about cooperation and world harmony.

But there can be no world cooperation as long as one country dominates over and exploits another and one group or class exploits another. Therefore, we shall have to put an end to all exploitation of man by man or woman. You cannot have a purely political ideal, for politics is after all only a small part of life, although situated as we are under alien rule, it dominates every branch of our activity. Your ideal must be a complete whole and must comprise life as it is today, economic, social as well as political. It can only be a social equality in the widest sense and equality of opportunity for everyone. It is notorious that we have neither of these today.

Our womenfolk, in spite of the great examples of old that we are so fond of repeating, are shackled and unfree. Large classes of our countrymen have been deliberately suppressed by us in the past and denied all opportunities of growth in the name of religion and ancient practice. And all over India, we see today millions toiling in field and factory and starving in spite of their toil. How can we rid these millions of their dire poverty and misery and make them share in the

freedom to come? We hear of the service of the poor and sometimes even of the exaltation of the poor. And by a little act of charity or service we imagine that our duty is done. Having reserved very magnanimously the kingdom of heaven for the poor we take good care to keep the kingdom of the earth for ourselves. Youth at least should be above this hypocrisy. Poverty is not a good thing; it is not to be exalted or praised but an evil thing which must be fought and stamped out. The poor require no petty services from us or charity. They want to cease to be poor. That can only come by your changing a system which produces poverty and misery.

In the course of the last few months you have seen the whole of India convulsed in labour troubles. Lock-outs and strikes and shootings have followed one after another. Is it amusing, do you think, to the worker to strike and starve and perhaps be shot? Surely no one does so unless his lot becomes unbearable. And indeed the lot of the Indian today in factory or field is past all endurance. In the jute mill of your province, profits and reserve accumulations in ten years before 1926 amounted to nearly 440 crores of rupees. Think of this enormous figure and then see the condition of poor workers in these mills. And yet the jute workers, miserable as they are, have gone there because there was no room for them on the land or their conditions on the land were even worse. Can you expect any peace in the land when there is so much misery and so much contrast between wealth and abject poverty?

You cannot ignore these problems or leave them to a future age for solution. And if you are afraid of tackling them, you will find that facts can only be ignored at your peril. We are sometimes told that we must do justice between landlord and tenant and capitalist and worker, and justice means the maintenance of the *status quo*. It is the kind of justice the League of Nations gives when it maintains the present *status quo* with the imperialist powers dominating and exploiting half the earth. When the *status quo* itself is rank injustice, those who desire to maintain it must be considered as upholders of that injustice.

If your ideal is to be one of social equality and a world federation, then perforce we must work for a socialist state. The word socialism frightens many people in this country but that matters little for fear is their constant companion. Ignorant of everything important that has happened in the world of thought since they left their school books, they fear what they do not and will not understand.

It is for you, the youth of the country, to appreciate the new forces and ideas that are convulsing the world and to apply them to your own country. For socialism is the only hope for a distraught world today. It is interesting to note that during the great war when a great crisis

threatened to engulf the nations of the West, even the capitalist countries of Europe were forced to adopt socialistic measures to a large extent. This was not only done internally in each country but, unable to resist the pressure of events, even internationally. There was cooperation in many fields and national boundaries seemed to recede into the background. There was economic cooperation of the closest kind and ultimately even the armies of many nations became one army under a single head. But the lesson of the war has been lost and again we drift towards a greater disaster.

Socialism frightens some of our friends, but what of communism? Our elders sitting in their council chambers shake their grey heads and stroke their beards in alarm at the mere mention of the word. And yet I doubt if any of them has the slightest knowledge of what communism is. You have read of the two new measures which are being rushed through the Assembly—one of them to throttle the trade union movement, and the other to keep out people whom the government suspects of communism. Has it struck you that it is a very curious thing that the mighty British Empire with all its tanks and aeroplanes and dreadnoughts should be afraid of a few individuals who come to spread a new idea? What is there in this new idea that the British Empire should collapse like a pack of cards before this airy nothing? Surely you could not have better evidence of the weakness of this giant empire which sprawls over the fairest portions of the earth's surface. It is a giant with feet of clay. But if an idea is a dangerous thing, it is also a very elusive thing. It crosses frontiers and customs barriers without paying any duty and bayonets and men of war cannot stop it. The Government of India must be strangely lacking in intelligence if they imagine that they can stop any ideas from entering India by legislation.

What is the communist idea before which the British Empire quakes? I do not propose to discuss it here, but I wish to tell you that though personally I do not agree with many of the methods of the communists, and I am by no means sure to what extent communism can suit present conditions in India, I do believe in communism as an ideal of society. For essentially it is socialism, and socialism, I think, is the only way if the world is to escape disaster.

And Russia, what of her? An outcast like us from nations and much slandered and often erring. But in spite of her many mistakes she stands today as the greatest opponent of imperialism and her record with the nations of the East has been just and generous. In China, Turkey and Persia of her own free will she gave up her valuable rights and concessions, while the British bombarded the crowded Chinese

cities and killed Chinamen by the hundreds because they dared to protest against British imperialism.

In the city of Tabriz in Persia, when the Russian ambassador first came, he called the populace together and on behalf of the Russian nation tendered formal apology for the sins of the Tzars. Russia goes to the East as an equal, not as a conqueror or a race-proud superior. Is it any wonder that she is welcomed?

Some of you may go in after years to foreign countries for your studies. If you go to England, you will realise in full measure what race prejudice is. If you go to the Continent of Europe, you will be more welcome whether you go to France or Germany or Italy. If any of you go to Russia, you will see how racial feeling is utterly absent and the Chinamen who throng the universities of Moscow are treated just like others.

I have placed before you the ideals of internationalism and socialism as the only ideals worthy of the fine temper of youth. Internationalism can of course come to us only through national independence. It cannot come through the British Empire or the British Commonwealth of Nations, call it what you will, for that empire is today the greatest foe of internationalism. If in future England chooses to enter a real world federation none will welcome her more than we, but she will have to shed her imperialism before she can enter. Our quarrel is not with the people of England but with the imperialism of England.

I have laid stress on internationalism although it may be a distant ideal for us. But the world is already largely international, although we may not realise it. And situated as we are, the reaction against foreign rule is apt to make us narrowly national. We talk of the greatness of India, of her special mission to the world and we love to dwell on her past. It is well that we remember our past, for it was great and worth remembering. But it is for the aged to look back; youth's eyes should be turned to the future. And I have often wondered if there is any country in the world, any people who do not fancy that they have a special mission for the world. England has her white man's burden which she insists on carrying in spite of the ungrateful people who object and rebel; France has her *mission civilisatrice*; America is God's own country; Germany has *Kultur*; Italy has her new gospel of Fascism; and Russia her Communism. And it has been so always. The Jews were the elect of the Lord, and so were the Arabs. Does it not strike you as strange that every country should have the identical notion of having a special mission to reform the world, to enrich its culture in some way, and none need lay claim to being the chosen of the Lord?

Self-admiration is always a dangerous thing in an individual. It is equally dangerous in a nation, for it makes it self-satisfied and indolent and the world passes by leaving it behind. We have little enough reason to be satisfied with our present lot, with many of our customs, with our excessive religiosity, with the sad lot of our women and the terrible condition of the masses. What good does it do us to waste our energy and our time in chanting praises of the dead past when the present claims our attention and work awaits us? The world changes and is changing rapidly and if we cannot adapt our society to the new conditions, we are doomed to perish. We have seen what can be done in a brief span of years and even months by a Kemal Pasha or an Amanullah who were not afraid to break through ancient custom and prejudice. What has been done in Turkey and backward Afghanistan can be done in India. But it can only be done in the manner of Kemal Pasha or Amanullah, by fearlessly facing obstacles and removing them and not waiting till the crack of doom for slow reform. It is not a choice for you as it was not a choice for Turkey or Afghanistan, between extinction and immediate action. Turkey and Afghanistan chose the latter path and are reckoned today as great nations. What will your choice be?

The world is in a bad way and India especially is in a perilous state in spite of the glitter and superficial splendour of our great cities. There are rumours of war and awful prophecies that the next war may result in irretrievable disaster to civilisation. But the very excess of evil may hasten the cure.

Does not our own Gita state:

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।⁴
 अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥
 परित्राणाय साधूनाम् विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।
 धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥

4. "Yada yada his dharmasya glanirbhavati Bharata
 Abhyutthanam adharmasya tadatmanam srijamyaham.
 Paritrāṇāya sādhoonam vinasaya ca duṣkṛitām
 Dharma samsthapanarthāya sambhavamī yuge yuge."

[Chapter IV, Verses 7 & 8]

Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, O Bharata (Arjuna), then I send forth myself.

For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness, I come into being from age to age.

Great men have come from age to age in this country and elsewhere to help mankind. But greater than any man is the idea which he has embodied. And the conception of *Dharma* changes from age to age, and in a changing world a custom that was good in the past may be perilous to society today. You do not go to Bombay today in a bullock cart or fight with bows and arrows. Why stick to customs which were good only in the days of the bullock cart and bows and arrows?

And the great men who have come have always been rebels against the existing order. Two thousand five hundred years ago the great Buddha proclaimed his gospel of social equality and fought against all privileges, priestly and otherwise. He was a champion of the people against all who sought to exploit them. Then came another great rebel, Christ, and then the Prophet of Arabia, who did not hesitate to break and change almost everything he found. They were realists who saw that the world had outgrown its ancient practices and sought to bring it back to reality. Even so we have outgrown the creeds and rituals of yesterday and as realists we must not hesitate to discard them wherever they clash with reality. The *avatars* of today are great ideals which come to reform the world. And the idea of the day is social equality. Let us listen to it and become its instruments to transform the world and make it a better place to live in.

I may be a weak instrument capable of doing little by myself in spite of my ardent desire to do much. And you individually may be able to do little. But you and I together can do much and working with the awakened youth of this country we can and will achieve a great deal. For only youth can save this country and the world. I do not admire the Fascists but I admire them for having as their war-cry a hymn to youth: *Giovinezza*. And I wish you would also adopt their motto "Live dangerously". Let our elders seek security and stability. Our quest must be adventure, but adventure in a noble enterprise which promises to bring peace to a distracted world and security and stability to the millions who have it not.

You and I are Indians and to India we owe much, but we are human beings also and to humanity we also owe a debt. Let us be citizens of the commonwealth or empire of youth. This is the only empire to which we can owe allegiance, for that is the forerunner of the future federation of the world.

9. Reply to Address of All Bengal Students Association¹

Political freedom is never achieved without some kind of sanction behind it. This sanction or force may be physical, non-violent or violent but it is to be admitted that there must be some such force behind to achieve political freedom. You can't expect that foreigners should be so generous or unselfish, that they ought not to have any interest for themselves. History has yet to show a country which has been so unselfish. A nation possesses more of the psychology of the mob; and the psychology of the mob is lower than that of an individual. During the noncooperation movement there was some kind of sanction. This sanction, though on a smaller scale, was the first of its kind so far as India is concerned. There was of course a strong movement in Bengal before that. So far India as a whole is concerned, it was only in the period of noncooperation that an attempt was made to develop mass sanction. It has of course not achieved freedom for India but it has been successful in creating fear in the Government of India. There is no doubt about that. Let us not discuss noncooperation. But how can we develop that sanction? It is said that any amount of sanction that is developed in the country will be inadequate to put pressure on the Britishers. But whatever the method, if we join together it is bound to succeed. Reference has been made from time to time to boycott of foreign cloth, British goods and the like. There is no shadow of doubt that these are bound to succeed to the extent they get sanction behind them. We are to develop such sanction behind us. But what do I mean by "we"? Does it mean men who understand English? I do submit that the English educated classes by themselves can wrest freedom from the Britishers. It is quite a conceivable thing provided they act together and do not go against the masses. But if we analyse the English educated classes in the country we find that quite a large number of them owe their very existence to the British Government; either it is for service or hope of services or the like. He will naturally be afraid if the British rule goes away. Take the instance of trade; a great deal of trade is dependent on the British connection. There is no doubt that a large number of people who are directly or indirectly

1. Calcutta, 25 September 1928. *The Searchlight*, 5 October 1928.

connected with the British Government think that political independence will bring disaster to them. The English educated classes in the country are split up in two. The one is connected with the British Government. They may in theory like freedom but are afraid of the consequences that may befall them. Another class which is desirous of freedom in a different degree of intensity is the unemployed intellectual class which has really very little to lose in case the change takes place. They think that in future India, their position will not be the same as it is now.

Feudalism all over the world is dying. But in India the Indian princes are the embodiments of feudalism. It is inconceivable that in future India, the Indian princes should remain as they are at the present moment. Personally, I cannot conceive such an idea. They are bound to lose a good number of their privileges if they do not lose them completely. They certainly cannot desire the dawning of Swaraj unless they are extremely unselfish. Similarly the big zamindars may feel the same way. They are enjoying certain privileges which they may not expect to enjoy when Swaraj is established in India. There may be individual zamindars and also princes who may sincerely desire Swaraj in India but they, the zamindars as a class, cannot certainly desire political freedom for India. If we analyse the various other classes we find that their interest is solely centred round the British rule in India. So we find that it becomes a very difficult proposition.

We come back to the place from where we started. Let us now analyse the position of another class. They are obviously the peasants and the industrial workers and members of the other like professions. But undoubtedly these classes have a great deal to gain and very little to lose if the alien rule is abolished. These are the people who must form the armies or forces to fight the battle of India's freedom. It is in their interest to do this as they have got very little to lose. Primarily the struggle will rest on them and it is bound to rest on them. The intellectual classes must join along with the tenants and the industrial workers. Other classes may possibly extend their support to them. Without the support of the masses or the industrial or the agricultural workers it is inconceivable that India can achieve her freedom. So you are bound to depend on the masses. But how are you going to approach the masses? Many of you have experience of the organisation of masses or of village work. It may be that the ideal of Swaraj may not be understood by the ordinary peasants. You may see that many of them might not be very enthusiastic about Swaraj. It is a thing that they may not thoroughly appreciate. They may not take any interest in this change of their condition. It is a fact that they will not feel

inclined to your ideal so long as you do not place an economic programme before them. Without such a programme you cannot organise them. When you see that the condition of the masses is so deplorable you cannot utterly ignore it. What after all is political independence or the national ideal? It certainly does not mean independence for the rocks or rivers of India, it means the betterment of human beings that live in India. What is to be the economic ideal that we should have? There are party organisations which think that by extending from 5 to 10 years the period of tenant occupancy they will be able to solve the problem. But you cannot get it by such petty reforms. If you face the problem you must root out the cause. So you come back to the fundamental basis of socialism. Thus you cannot avoid socialism however much you may dislike it.

10. To Subhas Chandra Bose¹

Allahabad
October 2, 1928

My dear Subhas,

I hope you have come back from Jamshedpur safe and sound.

I had a visit yesterday from D. L. Ananda Rao who is the organising scout commissioner in these provinces. He has been connected with the *Seva Samity* scouts. I am personally not in favour of the *Seva Samity* and their scouts. There is too much of "God save the King" for my liking. But Ananda Rao need not be judged by his association with the *Seva Samity*. He proposes to leave it very soon. He is very keen on youth organisation and for the last many months he has been touring all over India for the purpose of inviting organisations of students and others to cooperate in the next All India Youth Congress. I have naturally referred him to you on the subject and he will probably write to you. Should you so desire he may pay you a visit in Calcutta or you may put him in touch with the people in charge of the next Youth Congress. You will probably find him of considerable assistance

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-39/1928 (Pt. I), p. 73, N.M.M.L.

as he knows personally a large number of youth organisations in India and is very keen on the subject.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. Message to Lahore Students Union¹

I am sorry I am unable to be present at the first annual function² of the Lahore Students Union. In a world full of strife and misery nothing is more promising than the awakening and revolt of youth. I am very glad that the students of Lahore have organised themselves into a union and I hope that through this union they will not only try to better their own lot, but will equip themselves by study and co-operative effort and action. Whenever necessary, take an effective part in evolving a new social order, which will bring freedom to the nation as well as to the millions of individuals who comprise the nation. National freedom is good, but it does not take us very far if the great majority of our countrymen are unable to participate in it and are denied all opportunities for advancement by an economic or social order which enslaves them. It is for the youth of this country to think out the solution and work for it with all their might regardless of the selfish claims of vested rights, whether political, economic or social. Let them leave their elders to compromise and temporise. Youth thinks and acts in terms of eternity and cares little for the petty gains and losses of today and tomorrow. And in thinking and acting so, youth is eminently practical, far more so than the short-sighted men and women who think themselves very practical because they have no ideals and no visions of the future and seldom see beyond the tips of their noses. No building of any consequence can be raised without a plan and careful thought and proper foundation. You cannot raise a noble palace on the foundations of mud. And the great structure of a future order of a free society cannot be raised unless as practical men and women we lay firm

1. *The Tribune*, 9 October 1928.

2. Held on 7 October 1928.

foundations for it here and now. Therefore, to be an idealist is to be a realist of the kind that matters. I hope that the students of Lahore will be idealists and realists of this kind. I wish them all success in their high endeavour.

12. Reply to Students' Welcome Address at Meerut¹

Pandit Nehru expressed dissatisfaction that the address was organised by the elders. If the students had arranged it, it would not have been so formal and serious. They would not have heaped praises. He hated such praise. Young students should not subscribe to such formalities which were meant for elders. He wanted them to revolt against the tame spirit of unquestioned obedience. They should try to assert themselves.

1. 12 October 1928. *The Hindustan Times*, 14 October 1928.

13. On the Task of Students¹

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru began by saying that he had not been supplied with any subject on which to speak. He would therefore deal with some matters affecting the students' interest outside India.

Of the students who went abroad for education and training, a very large majority went to London alone, and to their utter misfortune they were subjected to all sorts of wretched treatment at the hands of the Britishers, not on account of colour or complexion but simply because of their being Indians, a subject race. No

1. Speech at Muzaffarpur, 16 November 1928. *The Searchlight*, 23 November 1928.

such sentiment existed in any other European country against any foreigner and therefore he would advise the Indian students to go to other foreign countries, if they at all wished to go outside India to receive such technical education as they needed. Students going to London generally went with the impression that on completing their studies there they would be provided with lucrative jobs on their return to India. But such an idea at the cost of personal and national prestige involved a high price which no self-respecting nation should pay.

He exhorted Indians to study the real state of affairs in other countries, for all that they learnt about other countries through books and the information supplied to them by British agencies were far from true and were only meant to create an impression about the gigantic strength and influence of the British people over all other countries. In fact the truth was that America was today the greatest power in the West, and France and Germany and other countries of the western world were in no way inferior to the British nation either in point of strength or in cultural advancement.

The Russians, though they were not very strong, nor had wealth enough for the present to cope with the Britishers, were fast organising themselves on a solid economic basis and fully utilising the vast resources of their great country which was about one fourth or one fifth of the whole world.

Today the political doctrine of the country which had received a very enthusiastic reception from the people not only in Russia but in other countries as well was a kind of socialism. This was the only doctrine on which labour, peasantry and working classes could be permanently organised. The Government of India was foolishly afraid of it and therefore wanted to devise measures to stop the spread of this doctrine in India. It was with that aim in view that the Public Safety Bill which had been defeated by one vote was introduced in the Assembly. He said that the attempt was foolish because it was preposterous to stop anybody from thinking on a particular line.

Regarding the Nehru Report, he deplored the attitude² of some of the Mohamadans, principally of Maulana Shaukat Ali and others

2. Maulana Shaukat Ali had said on 4 November that he was against the Nehru Report because it had been prepared with a view to remove the Hindu Mahasabha's grievances and to bring the moderates into the national movement. Motilal Nehru had been responsible for reopening the decisions of the Madras Congress not only on constitutional points, but also on communal adjustments.

who were present in the All Parties Conference and raised no voice to protest there against the Report.

He discussed the question relating to Hindu-Moslem representation in the Councils in detail, and pointed out that the Mohamadans were certainly the gainer by the Nehru Report. He advised the Mohamadans not to complicate the situation but try to solve the difficulties by stating their viewpoints in the All Parties Convention which was to meet at Calcutta during the Congress week.

14. Presidential Address at the Bombay Presidency Youth Conference¹

Friends and Comrades,

I am a little tired and weary of conferences and a little doubtful of the extent of their utility. But even though my enthusiasm for conferences may have waned, my attraction to a conference of youth remains, for it is so unlike the gatherings of older folk. Many of you also, it may be, when you grow older, may unhappily fall into the ancient ruts and forget the spirit of adventure and dare-devilry which was yours when you were young. But today you are young and full of enthusiasm and I, with the years creeping on me, have come to you to be a sharer in your abounding hope and courage and to take back with me to my daily work some measure of your faith and enthusiasm. I have come, because the call of youth is an imperative one and few can say no to it, and when this call came from you, young men and women of Bombay who have been the leaders in the recent awakening of youth in this country, I appreciated the honour all the more and gratefully accepted it.

Why do people meet in conference? Why have you met here today? Not surely just to deliver speeches and listen to them or as a mere diversion from your work and play. Not simply to play a

1. Poona, 12 December 1928. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 13 December 1928.

The Government of India regarded this speech as particularly mischievous and dangerous as it was thought to advocate the use of material force, and informed local governments that if the movement grew in that particular form, then the law should take its course.

(Home Department (Political) File No. 168/1929, National Archives of India).

prominent part in the political or social arena, to become a celebrity and be intoxicated by the applause of the multitude. You have met here, I take it, because you are not content with things as they are and seek to change them. Because you do not believe that all is for the best in this best of all possible worlds. Because you feel the weight on your young shoulders of the sorrow and misery of this country and this world of ours, and with the energy and fine temper of youth you believe that you have it in you to remove this load of sorrow or at least to lessen its weight. If this is the urge that has brought you here, then you have met well and out of your meetings and deliberations something of permanent good might emerge. But if you are not dissatisfied with existing conditions, if you have not felt this urge which makes you restless and drives and lashes you to action, then wherein do you differ from the gathering of older people who talk and debate and argue much and act little? It is not those who are continually seeking security and have made a god of discretion who reform the world. It is not the sleek and shiny people having more than their share of this world's goods who are the apostles of change. The world changes and progresses because of those who are disaffected and who are not prepared to tolerate the evils and injustice of things as they are or have been.

The basis of society is some measure of security and stability. Without security and stability there could be no society or social life, but how many today in our present-day society have this security and stability? You know that the millions have it not; they have hardly enough to keep body and soul together. And it is a mockery to speak to them of security. So long as the masses do not share in this security, you can have no stable society. And so you see in the history of the world, revolution after revolution, not because any group or person is a lover of bloodshed, anarchy and disorder, but because of this desire for greater security for larger number of persons. We shall have real security and stability in this world only when it has come to signify the well-being of the vast majority of the people, if not all, and not of small groups only. That time may not be near, but society is continually, sometimes it may even be a little blindly, struggling towards it. And the greater the struggle, the greater the urge to that end, the healthier and more vital the society. If this urge is wholly absent, society becomes static and lifeless and gradually withers away.

So long therefore as the world is not perfect, a healthy society must have the seeds of revolt in it. It must alternate between revolution and consideration. It is the function of youth to supply this dynamic element in society; to be the standard-bearers of revolt against all that

is evil and to prevent older people from suppressing all social progress and movement by the mere weight of their inertia.

Many of you may wonder why I am addressing you in this somewhat academic vein. I do so partly because I am no orator and platform hero and partly because I feel that most of our troubles are due to a false ideology. Acceptance by foreign, political and economic domination is bad enough, but the use of ideology of our rulers is to my mind even worse, for it stunts all efforts and sends us wandering aimlessly in blind alleys with no opening. I want, therefore, as far as I can, to get my own thinking straight and to remove the cobwebs from my brain and I should like you also to do likewise. It will do us little good to repeat the political catch-words of the day without clear thinking on our part as to what we are aiming at and how we attain our goal. I shall welcome your agreement with me but that would mean little if it has not been preceded by thought and conviction. I am much more concerned with finding in you a true appreciation of the present condition of the world, a passionate desire to better it, and an earnest spirit of enquiry as to what to do and how to do it. Reject utterly what I say to you if you think it is wrong. But reject also everything, however hallowed it may be by tradition and convention and religious sanction, if your reason tells you that it is wrong or unsuited to the present condition. For "religions" as the Chinese say, "are many, but reason is one".

What do we find in this world of ours today? Utter misery is the lot of vast numbers of people and while a few live in luxury, the many lack even bread and clothing and have no opportunity for development. Wars and conflicts ravage the world and the energy that should go to build up a better order of society is spent largely in mutual competition and destruction. If that is the condition of the world at large, what of our own unhappy country? Foreign rule has reduced her to utmost poverty and misery and a rigid adherence to outworn customs and ideas has sapped the life out of her.

There is obviously something radically wrong with the world and one is led to doubt if there is any ultimate purpose behind this chaos and unhappiness. Two thousand five hundred years ago the Prince Sidhartha, who later became the Great Buddha, saw this misery and in agony of spirit put himself the same question :

How can it be that Brahma
Would make a world and keep it miserable?
Since if all powerful He leaves it so,
He is not good, and if not powerful,
He is not God!

But whether there is any ultimate purpose or not, the immediate purpose of every human being should be to reduce this misery and to help in building up a better society, and a better society must necessarily aim at the elimination of all domination of one nation over another or of man over man. It must replace competition by cooperation.

You have probably often condemned British imperialism because you suffer under it. But have you thought it is but a manifestation, certainly the most objectionable and aggressive manifestation, of a world phenomenon? And that this world imperialism is the direct outcome of a system of society which prevails in the greater part of the world today and is called capitalism. Your immediate problem and mine is to gain political freedom for our country, but this is only part of the problem facing us. So long as imperialism is not rooted out, mankind will be exploited and oppressed by a few. It may be that some of us may join the ranks of the exploiters, but that will not bring freedom to the many. We must aim, therefore, at the destruction of all imperialism and the reconstruction of society on another basis. That basis must be one of cooperation, and that is another name for socialism. Our national ideal must, therefore, be the establishment of a cooperative socialist commonwealth and our international ideal, a world federation of socialist states.

Before we approach our ideal, we have to combat two sets of opponents—political and social. We have to overcome our alien rulers as well as the social reactionaries of India. In the past we have seen the curious phenomenon in India of the political extremist sometimes being a reactionary in social matters, and not unoften the political moderate has been socially more advanced. But it is impossible to separate the political life of the country from its social and economic life and you cannot cure the social organism by treating one part of it only. The infection from one affected part continually spreads to other parts and the disease takes firmer root. Your political and social philosophy must, therefore, be a complete whole and your programme must comprise every department of national activity.

It is clear today, even if there was some doubt of it in the past, that the social reactionary is the ally of those who wish to keep India in subjection. If any proof was needed of this self-evident fact, the events of the past few months have provided it. You have seen and you have helped in the magnificent boycott of the Simon Commission. You have also seen how some people and some groups have cooperated with this Commission and joined in welcoming it in defiance of the national will. Who are these people and these groups? Almost invariably you will find that they are the social reactionaries, communalists, those who

want favours and privileges for themselves at the expense of the larger community.

An even more striking instance of the alliance of political and social reaction is the attitude of the present government in India towards measures of social reform. Efforts made by the representatives of the people to get rid of harmful social customs are checkmated by government and our society cannot progress sufficiently fast or adapt itself to changing circumstances largely because of official opposition. The British Government of India have become the self-constituted guardians of Hindu and Muslim customs and traditions. Recently in the debate in the Assembly on the Public Safety Bill, it was a touching sight to see the spokesmen of government waxing eloquent on the beauties of Hindu and Islamic ideals of society and pointing out in woeful accents the terrible upheavals that would follow the spread of socialistic and communistic ideas. It would almost appear that the British occupants of the official benches in the Assembly were on the verge of being won over by the enthusiasts for *Shuddhi* or *Tabligh*—it was not quite clear which they favoured most. It is a strange sight with a moral that none can miss, to see the Christian rulers of India pretending to become the bulwarks of Hinduism and Islam.

Religion has in the past often been used as an opiate to dull men's desire for freedom. Kings and emperors have exploited it for their own benefit and led people to believe in their divine right to rule. Priests and other privileged classes have claimed a divine sanction for their privileges. And with the aid of religion the masses have been told that their miseries are due to *kismet* or the sins of a former age. Women have been and are still kept down and in the name of religion in many places are made to submit to that barbarous relic of an earlier age—the *purdah* system. The depressed or the suppressed classes cry out to the world how infamously religion has been exploited to keep them down and prevent them from rising. Religion has been the fountain-head of authoritarianism and meek submission and it is because our rulers realise this and because their own rule is based on this ideology of authoritarianism that they seek to bolster up its cruder manifestations in India. If the spirit of intellectual revolt spreads to ancient custom and tradition, then the very basis of authoritarianism crumbles and takes with it the foundation of British rule.

In India today and indeed in the world there is a great deal of argument and debate on matters political and social. From all this argument two sets of opposing ideas emerge. One is the reformist idea which believes in a gradual betterment with the consent of those in power or in positions of privilege today. It believes in a slow evolu-

tionary process. In the political field it believes in the achievement of Dominion Status by agreement or consent of the British; in the economic field it relies on a gradual conquest of power from the capitalist and the landholder with their consent also, though this may be grudging and partial; in the purely social domain reforms are to come by the slow displacement of the parties of privileges. The other idea is the revolutionary one which seeks rapid change and does not believe in the holders of power ever giving it up unless they are forced to do so. Consent comes in here also; but it is the unwilling and forced consent of the vanquished.

These rival ideas are fighting for mastery today. There is little doubt as to which will emerge victorious in the end. To a large extent both the evolutionary and the revolutionary methods work side by side. Every revolution is preceded by a process of evolution and preparation. But the difference in ideology is of vital importance and therefore it becomes essential for you to make your choice and throw all your strength and might on the side you favour.

If any of you believe that you can force power out of those who possess it today by sweet reason and argument, then all I can say is that you have not read history with much profit, nor have paid much heed to recent events in India. The problem before us is the problem of the conquest of power. In our Councils and Assemblies where fine speeches, however strongly worded they may be, do not affect the seat of power, we see an outward show of argument and reason, although even then the attitude of official spokesmen is often insulting and overbearing. But go outside to the fields and the market-place and you will find that whenever there is a clash between the popular will and the will of the government, however peaceful the people may be, the government meets them, not by argument and reason, but by the bayonet and the policeman's baton, by shooting and sometimes by martial law. The fundamental fact of the situation is the bayonet and baton. How can you argue or be sweetly reasonable with cold steel and dead wood? You must meet them, if you wish to overcome them, by other methods; by the development of sanctions greater and more powerful than the bayonet and baton that face you.

The government, it is said, must preserve law and order. What matters it, if this results in the gravest disorder and in death and injury to the people? Every Indian knows the crimes that have been and are being committed in the name of law and order, and yet there are some of us still who are obsessed by this notion. Law and order are the last refuge of the reactionary, of the tyrant and of him who has power and refuses to part with it. There can be no law or order till

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru



President
Bombay Presidency Youth Conference
POONA.

Jawaharlal Nehru
13.12.28.

परिचित जवाहरलाल जी नेहरू



आप आगाम १६, २० और २२ अक्टूबर को भांसी में होने वाली
युक्तप्रांतीय राजनैतिक कांफ्रेंस के सभापति चुने गये हैं।

PRESIDENT OF THE U.P. POLITICAL CONFERENCE, OCTOBER 1928

freedom comes, for as the French philosopher Proudhon² said, "Liberty is not the daughter but the mother of order."

The advocates of reformism make earnest and eloquent pleas for change. With an advocate's zeal they try to score fine legal points over their adversaries. But their forensic ability is wasted on their opponents who carry on unmoved, well knowing that their power is not threatened by such methods; it rests on the solid steel of the bayonet. And unhappily even the common man on whose behalf the reformists argue, is unmoved by their argument. He does not understand it, nor is any great attempt made to make him understand. All the energy is spent in compromises between the leaders, in efforts to lull various vested interests, and the masses are ignored. Is it any wonder that the masses in their turn remain apathetic and do not respond to the call of leaders? The head of the nation is so far away from the rest of the body that the trunk can hardly see it.

It is not thus freedom has been won and greater changes brought about. The voice that claims it must be the voice of revolt, the dull and threatening roar from a hundred thousand and a million throats, not the sweetly modulated tone of an accomplished debater. When that voice is raised, England, as she has always done in the past, will bow to the inevitable. But if that voice is not raised, do not imagine that you can hoax or trick the English people out of power.

The voice of the masses will only be raised if you put before them an ideal and a programme which affects them and improves their economic condition and when raised, it will only be followed by action if the end in view is worth the struggle and sacrifice.

The governor of the province I come from, recently, following the tradition of his tribe, gave advice to the taluqdars of Oudh. He told them to choose their allies wisely. That advice I heartily commend to you although it is highly probable that my choice and yours will be very different from that of Governor Hailey. In choosing your allies you have to see who are the vital elements in the nation and who are the parties who are going to profit by the freedom of India and who are those who profit by the British exploitation of your country. Choose the former and do not waste your time and energy in trying to appease or win over the latter. Above all ally yourself to the masses of the country—the peasantry and the industrial workers—and think in terms of them when you envisage a free India. And if you do so, you will automatically avoid the pitfalls of reformism and petty compromise. You will have your pulse on reality and your programme will

2. Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-65); French social theorist famous for his remark, "Property is theft", in his pamphlet, *What is Property*.

be a live programme with the sanction of the masses behind it. And freedom for the masses must inevitably mean the end of British as well as all other exploitation. It must mean the independence of India and the reconstruction of Indian society on the basis of social and economic equality.

The freedom of India is dear to all of us here. But there may be many here who have the ordinary conveniences of life and are not hard put to it to find their daily bread. Our desire for freedom is a thing more of the mind than of the body, although even our bodies often suffer for the lack of freedom. But to the vast masses of our fellow-countrymen present conditions spell hunger and deepest poverty, an empty stomach and a bare back. For them freedom is a vital bodily necessity, and it is primarily to give them food and clothing and the ordinary amenities of life that we should strive for freedom. The most amazing and terrible thing about India is her poverty. It is not a dispensation from Providence or an inevitable condition of society. India has enough or can have enough for all her children if an alien government and some of her own sons did not corner the good things and so deprive the masses of their dues. "Poverty", said Ruskin,³ "is not due to natural inferiority of the poor or the inscrutable laws of God, or drink, but because others have picked their pockets." And the control of wealth by the few not only means the unhappiness of many, but it exercises a power over men's minds so that they do not wish for freedom. It is this mental outlook which paralyses the poor and the oppressed and it is this mentality of defeatism that you will have to fight.

You have been the leaders of the youth movement in India and you have built up a strong and living organism. But remember that organisations and institutions are passive instruments of man. They become living and vital only when they are pushed onward by the strength of great ideas. Have great ideals before you and do not lower them by ignoble compromise. Look deep down to where the millions toil in field and factory and look across the frontiers of India to where others like you are facing problems similar to yours. Be national, the sons and daughters of your ancient motherland working for her liberation; and be international, members of the Republic of Youth, which knows no boundaries or frontiers or nationalities and works for the liberation of the world from all thralldom and injustice. "To do great things", said a Frenchman many years ago, "a man must live as if he had never to die". None of us can evade death, but youth at least does not think of it. Old men work for the span of years that still remains for them, the young work for eternity.

3. John Ruskin (1819-1900); English writer and art critic.

15. Speech at the Bombay Youth League¹

What we want in the country is a clash of ideas leading to clear thinking and ultimately its translation into action. Politics, like any other vocation, requires trained experts, and those of you who are training yourselves for politics should remember that the governance of mankind is no easy job. But unfortunately in India and all over the world there are all types of politicians and there is a wonderful exhibition of ignoramuses strutting about the political arena as politicians and high government officials. In North India, ministership has become a scandal. So young men and women should not carry home with them rancour or ill-feeling about their comrades because of difference of opinion. You should let argument and debate help you to clarify your vision. You should act with a proper perspective of your ideal.

1. Poona, 13 December 1928. *The Hindu*, 14 December 1928.

16. On the Nature of Freedom¹

Pandit Jawaharlal, referring to the eulogising terms in which the Chairman² had described him, said it seemed to him that he belonged to a category of men, upon whom greatness was simply thrust. He was sure the audience had come to give expression of their sympathy and support to two ideas with which his name had been coupled. Those two ideas were "complete political freedom" and "complete social freedom". He had advocated these ideas from various platforms and had had a wonderful response from every part of the country, especially from the youth. He had absolutely no doubt that these ideas had come to stay in the country and would conquer in the end.

1. Bombay, 14 December 1928. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 15 December 1928.
2. Jamnadas Mehta.

Personally, he could not divorce political independence from social freedom. If complete political independence was to be attained a very great measure of social freedom ought to go with it. It meant real freedom to every man to hold his own beliefs, free from outside influence, and a patriotism nobody could question. The same could be said of those who advocated Dominion Status. Yet there was a gulf between the two. The difference was fundamental in the mental and ideological outlook about society, politics, and imperialism.

He asked the audience to realise this ideological difference. The advocates of Dominion Status were ideologically hopelessly in the wrong. They were not giving the correct lead to the country. The goal of the country ought to be one which should inspire courage and sacrifice on the part of the people. Every step for the advancement of the country must, therefore, be taken from the standpoint of whether it would increase the psychology of revolution among the people or not. If it did increase the psychology of revolution even by an iota such a programme should be propagated. He appealed to the youth to accept his ideology of creating a revolutionary atmosphere in the country in order to change the whole fabric of the society as it existed today.

It was a good sign that wherever he went he had seen, especially among the youth, a revolt against what is known as "authoritarianism". One of the curses of India was that Indians meekly submitted to customs and traditions and old sets of ideas, and this was the real strength of the British Government in India. The youth should not support social reactionaries because they injured the national cause, and social reaction was always followed by political reaction.

Youth should be the standard-bearers of complete political and social freedom. For a country to be free in the real sense of the term, it ought to gain freedom socially, politically and economically. Any programme towards the attainment of such freedom would, of course, meet with opposition of some sort. "Don't say anything which might hurt your friends on your right". This was the stock argument which was advanced so far as social customs and various privileges based on religious sanction were concerned.

What was needed was a radical change in the whole fabric of the society as it existed at present. It might be that it would have to do away with the class known as "landlords" and to dispose of "capitalists", but out of fear of that particular class or government a programme in that direction would never be contemplated. The result was that there were many in the country who talked about political freedom but dare not specify how that political freedom was going to affect 95 per cent

of the people of the country. For fear of the various vested interests in the country the programme would be so toned down till it assumed a sorry shape. It might be acceptable to the intellectual few but would not bring forth or inspire courage and sacrifice in the cause of that freedom.

17. Presidential Address at the Socialist Youth Congress¹

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that socialism was a very intricate subject, although the present cry for socialism was prevalent both among the intellectuals and the masses. They should explain the meaning of socialism to the masses and prepare the country to chalk out a plan of work. Socialism could be found in politics, religion and other spheres of activities. He had come there not to give them a learned discourse on socialistic doctrines, but to give them his good wishes as he knew very little of the subject. He felt however that only by true socialism was there any chance for the independence of the country. Socialism was not a mere war cry, but it was a thing to be learned, studied and practised.

He then referred to the ideas embodied in the speech of the Chairman² of the Reception Committee and asked the audience to examine those ideas carefully and chalk out a programme of work based on those ideas. He agreed with the Chairman in his suggestion about the formation of 'study circles' and advised the audience to meet and discuss in those circles and find out the real truth in socialism. It was incumbent therefore on the socialists to find out the truth in socialism and when they had succeeded in doing that they would secure a proper place in the country as socialists.

There were opinions, oppositions and suppositions in every Congress conference and congregation in the country and it was a good sign for the country which was proceeding to search for truth in its attainment of their goal. Socialism could not be attained

1. Calcutta, 27 December 1928. *The Indian Annual Register*, 1928, Volume II, pp. 453-54.
2. Dr. B. N. Dutta.

by excitement and enthusiasm but by serious and thoughtful study of all concomitant circumstances. If they were convinced that by socialism they would attain salvation, he asked them to preach it before the country. If they wanted socialism to grow in the country, they should prepare a band of militant groups to carry out their ideas. Socialistic fights in the country were going to be a stiff fight, but they would have to fight against a number of prejudices courageously.

Today the whole country was thinking seriously of the question of communalism. Hindus, Christians, Jains and Mahamadans were expressing their respective views. If they took up this particular work at the present moment he thought that they could remove this communal spirit by socialist ideas.

India, he concluded, was a tremendous country which comprised various provincial groups with different ideas. As socialists they could work for the unification of different groups in the provinces. If they could develop this idea they could attain salvation and international brotherhood would come into existence.

POLITICAL ADDRESSES
AND STATEMENTS

1. Reply to Address of the Allahabad District Board¹

I did not know that it was a special merit on my part to visit foreign countries, something which deserved the high honour you have done me. For a soldier to desert from the field of battle and while away his time in leisurely repose, far from the scenes of conflict, is not usually considered a very praiseworthy act. But you have made even this an occasion for doing me honour. The reason can only be, as you have yourself hinted, your exceeding kindness and your affection which seeks an occasion when there is none. May I say that nothing could give me greater pleasure than this token of affection from the peasants of the district of Allahabad and their representatives? I have wandered in many of your villages and have ever met with the warmest welcome, and the poorest out of his poverty has offered hospitality. Political life has many ups and downs, many disappointments, many sinkings of heart, and I have had my share of these, but all these have been more than amply compensated by the love and trust of the peasantry and I look back on my association with them with these feelings of gratitude. I can never forget them or their love and simple faith for one who is not one of them, who belonged to a different class and who lived a life of comfort and ease while they suffered poverty and a lack of all good things of life. They did me the high honour of treating me almost as one of themselves. That honour I shall treasure to the last.

You have referred to two things which are very dear to me, independence for this country of ours and equality between man and man. You could have chosen nothing else for which I cared as much. I rejoice that you sympathise with these ideals. Whatever difference there may be among politicians and others, I make bold to say that there is no Indian who does not want to look forward to complete independence for this country. Differences there are about methods. May I remind you that twenty years ago Gopal Krishna Gokhale, who dedicated his life to the service of the motherland, had said that he hoped that India would achieve complete independence some day? The day is twenty years nearer now than it was then, and let us hope that we shall see it soon.

1. 3 April 1928. Reprinted in *Life and Speeches of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru*, edited by R. Dwivedi, Allahabad, 1929, pp. 67-71.

Today we see a society in which there are tremendous differences between man and man — great riches on one side and great poverty on the other. Some people live in luxury without doing any work, while others work from morning to night with no rest or leisure and yet have not got the barest necessities of life. This cannot be right. It is the negation of justice. It is not the fault of our individuals who happen to be rich. It is the fault of the system and it is up to us to change this system which permits of exploitation of man by man and produces so much misery. Our country can produce enough to permit every man and woman living in it to live in comfort and peace. Every man and woman must have the opportunity to develop to the best of his or her ability. But to do so, we shall have to forget some of our ideas of a bygone age. Honour and merit must come from ability and hard work and not because of caste or birth or riches. Let each one of us consider the other as his brother, not higher or lower, neither to be worshipped nor despised, but treated as equal with equal rights to share this good country of ours and all it produces.

I have travelled much and I have compared with pain the condition of the peasantry in other countries with our peasants. In other countries, I have found a large measure of comfort and even luxury; here there is abject poverty, which is made worse by the evil customs which we still adhere to. We must fight and get rid of the causes of this poverty and also discard these customs which keep us from progress. We must learn what is happening in other countries and profit by their example. Our district boards often approach the government for grants. But have you realised that the whole machinery of government is run from the rural areas? All the money spent on the army, on the huge salaries of the Viceroy and Governors and other officials — where does it largely come from except from the poverty-stricken villages of India? Even our towns live at the expense of our villages. And what do our villages get in return? There is very little education, very little sanitation or medical facilities, and absolutely no arrangements for proper housing. All your money is taken away and when you beg for doles very little is given to you by way of favour. In other countries it is the bounden and first duty of the State to give free education to every person, free medical facilities and sanitation and to build good houses for the poor. In other countries, it is felt that no nation can be strong unless its men and women are healthy and well-educated. But here it is more important to pay heavy salaries to officials and spend money on the army. No one thinks of the poor, and the country is weak and poor. We must put an end to this if we have to build up a prosperous India full of healthy and educated men and women. The

future of India lies with the peasantry.

I thank you again for the honour you have done me and for the good wishes which you have so generously expressed. And I join with you in the fervent hope that our ideals may be speedily realised and India may come into her own again.

2. Presidential Address at Punjab Provincial Conference¹

I am deeply grateful for the honour you have done me. But few of you, I fancy, will envy me my position here today. It has become customary at our congresses and conferences to refer to the crisis which continually confronts us and every year we are told that the situation is more critical than before. Too frequent reminders have made the warning lose some of its meaning and the cry of wof often passes unheeded. But crisis or no crisis, it may be said without exaggeration that we are rapidly approaching the cross-roads of our destiny and whether we will like it or not, we shall have to make a vital choice. I do not refer to the seven uninvited gentlemen from England who have recently visited us and threaten to come again despite all protestation. Their comings and goings do not vastly excite me. But greater things are happening than the Simon Commission, vaster changes are afoot. The world is in ferment and strange forces are at work. The gods of yesterday are neglected and lie almost forgotten and new ideas and new myths convulse the people. Even from India with its immemorial and crushing weight of tradition and its fear of change, the challenge to the dead past has gone forth and increases in volume. Brave indeed must be the person who will don the role of prophet and point out with certainty the path to be pursued by us. I claim no such role and hence my hesitation in accepting the presidentship of this conference.

If the framing of a policy for India as a whole offers difficulties, the Punjab has her own problems which, small in themselves, have gradually overshadowed the larger issue and effectively prevent a solution. This province has earned a most unenviable reputation.

1. Amritsar, 11 April 1928. *The Tribune*, 18 April 1928. The speech was delivered in Hindi.

society is ever in a ferment.

And if there is a conflict between facts and ideas in the West, how much more do we see it in India? Many of us, regardless of what is happening all around us still live in the ancient past, and imagine that we can have it back again. Some want the Vedic age, others a reproduction of the early democratic days of Islam. But

“The moving finger writes;
And having writ, moves on:
Not all thy piety nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line.”

We forget that our ancient civilisations, great as they are, were meant for different ages and different conditions. We cannot have today, in an industrial age, an early agrarian economy such as we had in Vedic times; much less can we have in our country a civilisation meant for a desert country more than 1,300 years ago. And many of our traditions and habits and customs, our social laws, our caste system, the position we give to women, and the dogmas which religion has imposed on us, are the relics of a past, suitable in those far-off days but utterly out of joint with modern conditions. They are shibboleths today, in conflict with reality. Men's ideas may lag behind but it is not possible to arrest the course of time and the evolution of life.

Where there is conflict between the two, there is friction, and stagnation and progress is slow. Where ideas come into line with realities, then that fortunate country advances with a bound. Thus we have the instance of defeated, backward, disorganised and dogma-ridden Turkey changing suddenly, almost overnight, into a great and rapidly progressing country under the inspiring leadership of Kemal Pasha. We have also the instance of Russia, where a demoralised, illiterate and disunited people were changed into men of heroic mould, who faced and conquered war, famine and disease and a world of enemies. So also will India progress when she discards the myths and dogmas in favour of the reality of today.

We thus see that the world has now become a delicate and complicated organism, each part depending on the other, and none wholly capable of standing apart. How then can India ignore the rest of the world or keep herself in splendid isolation? India must understand world forces and take her proper share in the shaping of them. India must also get her ideas in line with facts and realities. The day she does so, her progress will be stupendous.

I have referred to industrialism and its effects on the modern world. Its evils are obvious and many of us dislike them intensely. But whether we like them or not we must realise that the spread of indus-

The Punjab has been described as a pitfall in the way of Swaraj, as an obstacle in the onward march of those who were fighting for India's freedom. The Punjab has undoubtedly earned a bad reputation. I have, however, an affection for the Punjab. I always remember the Punjab as the Punjab of 1919, when it suffered for the whole country and gave birth to the noncooperation movement. It was due to the suffering of the Punjab that the battle for freedom acquired a fresh momentum. The place where this conference is meeting has been sanctified by the blood of our national martyrs. Your present communal dissensions will soon be forgotten; but no one can forget the memorable events of 1919. With all its defects, the Punjab is a province of action. In other provinces we can get eloquent speakers, good writers, able lawyers, but few men of action. The Punjab is the province of practical men; and we can never despair of a province or a people who have the courage of their convictions and are prepared to make all sacrifices for what they hold dear. Even if the Punjab is now treading the wrong path, there is hope that it will one day return to the right path, because it cannot be said of the Punjab that it is stagnant or lifeless. It is and has always been full of life and vigour.

The industrial revolution has not affected India as much as other countries. Without going into all these changes in detail, some aspects of them might be worthy of consideration here. Industrialism has resulted in greater production and greater wealth, in the concentration of wealth in a few countries and a few individuals and a more unequal distribution of wealth. It has resulted in a struggle for raw material and markets, and has thus brought into existence the imperialism of the last century. It has caused wars and has given rise to the colonial empires of today. It has laid the seed of future wars. And recently it has taken the shape of an economic imperialism which, without the possession of territory, is as efficient and potent in exploiting other countries as any colonial empire of yesterday. All this is well known but what is perhaps not sufficiently realised is the international character of industrialism. It has broken down national boundaries and has made each nation, however powerful it may be, dependent on other countries. The idea of nationalism is almost as strong today as it was and in its holy name wars are fought and millions slaughtered. But it is a myth which is not in keeping with reality. The world has become internationalised; production is international, markets are international and transport is international, only men's ideas continue to be governed by a dogma which has no real meaning today. No nation is really independent, they are all interdependent. The world of reality has changed utterly but our ideas continue in the old rut and thus conflicts arise and

trialism cannot be checked. Even in India it is taking giant strides and no country can stop its onward march. Must we also succumb to all the evils which come in its train or is it fruitful for us to adopt industrialism without its major evils? We must remember that industrialism means the big machine and the machine is but a tool to be used for good or ill. Let us not blame the tool if the man who holds it misuses it and causes injury thereby.

In the West industrialism has led to large scale capitalism and imperialism. Many of us who denounce British imperialism in India do not realise that it is not a phenomenon peculiar to the British race or to India, or that it is the necessary consequence of industrial development on capitalist lines. For capitalism necessarily leads to exploitation of one man by another, one group by another, and one country by another. Therefore we are opposed to this imperialism and exploitation. We must also be opposed to capitalism as a system and to the domination of one country over another. The only alternative that is offered to us is some form of socialism, that is the state ownership of the means of production and distribution. We cannot escape the choice and if we really care for a better order of society and for ending the exploitation of man by man, we cannot but cast our weight on the side of socialism.

And if we so decide, what consequences follow? The necessary result is that we must not only fight British dominion in India on nationalistic ground but also on social and industrial grounds. This is all the more necessary as the modern form of imperial domination is not the old crude method of possession of territory, but the subtler way of economic imperialism. England may well permit us to have a larger measure of political liberty but this will be worth little if she holds economic dominion over us. And no Indian, capitalist or socialist, if he appreciates the full significance of this new slavery, can willingly submit to it.

Another consequence that must follow the adoption of the socialistic viewpoint is over changing all such customs as are based on privilege and birth, and caste and the like. From our future society we must cast out all parasites, so that the many who lack utterly the good things of life may also share in them to some extent. We must remember that poverty and want are no longer economic necessities; although under the present anarchic capitalist system they may be inevitable. The world and our country produce enough or can produce enough for the masses to attain a high standard of well-being, but unhappily the good things are cornered by a few and millions live in utter want. In India, the classic land of famine, famines are not caused by want of food but by the want of money to buy food. We have famines of money, not food.

The third consequence will affect our international contact and our international outlook. If we are opposed to imperialism and know that this is a phase of capitalism we must oppose the latter wherever we may meet it. England as a premier capitalistic and imperialistic power becomes our chief opponent in this field also, and there can be no effective cooperation between India and England so long as she does not come into line with modern progressive thought.

In the light of these considerations let us briefly examine the question of independence for India. Even if the National Congress had not pronounced in its favour, I am sure none of you would require to be converted to it. But some of our elders and friends suffer strangely from various complexes and delusions and the British Empire is one of them. They cannot get out of the professions and habits of a lifetime, nor can they rid themselves of the chains of their own fashioning. What is the British Empire today—"The third British Empire"—as an ardent advocate has called it? If we leave out India and the dependencies, it is like the famous Cheshire cat in *Alice in Wonderland* whose body has entirely disappeared and only the grin has remained. How long can this disembodied grin remain, I leave it to you to judge. The world has judged already and few imagine that it will endure long. The empire is fast approaching dissolution and a world crisis may end it. The British people have shown extraordinary ability in adapting themselves to changing circumstances and to this they owe their strength and the long lease of power that they have enjoyed. But the world is moving too fast for them and recent events, specially in relation to India, indicate that their old skill is gone. But whether the empire endures or not, how can India find a place in it when her national and international and economic interests conflict with it in almost every vital matter? We must recognise internationalism of today and act internationally if we are to face realities. We cannot be independent in the narrow sense. When we talk of independence we mean the severance of the British connection. Afterwards we can develop the friendliest contact with other countries including England. The British Commonwealth, in spite of its high-sounding name, does not stand for this international cooperation, and in its world policy has consistently stood for a narrow and selfish ideal and against the peace of the world.

If independence is our only and inevitable goal, we cannot in logic, in decency, ask the British to protect us from other foreign countries. I am wholly prepared to accept the argument that if we want British help to defend our frontiers, we are not fit for independence. But I wholly deny that we cannot face the risk of foreign invasion without British aid. No country is strong enough today, with the possible ex-

ception of the United States of America, to withstand a group of hostile countries. England certainly is not. But no one will say that England should, therefore, be deprived of her independence and put under alien control. The security of a country depends on many factors, on its relations with its neighbours and on the world situation generally. If the problem of Indian defence is examined in the light of these factors, the strength of India becomes obvious. She has no great dangers to face and in a military sense she is by no means weak. But even if there were danger, it is shameful and cowardly to seek for help from a nation which was in the past and is today oppressing us and preventing all growth. Whatever independence may or may not mean and whether we use that word or another, the one thing that we must keep in the forefront of our programme is the immediate withdrawal of the British army of occupation from this country. That is the real meaning of freedom. Unless that takes place, all other talk is merely moonshine.

We may demand freedom for our country on many grounds. Ultimately it is the economic problem that matters. Our educated classes have so far taken the lead in the fight for Swaraj. The economic pressure on them was considerable and others were only vocal elements; and so the demand has taken the form occasionally of Indianisation of services, of higher posts being thrown open to Indians. They are to blame for these demands. They have acted as every class conscious of its interests acts. But in doing so they have seldom paid heed to deeds of the masses. Whenever vital questions affecting the masses have arisen, they have been shelved, they have been asked to stand over till Swaraj has been attained! Why confuse the issues now, it has been said, we can settle our problems later. Like all class conscious groups, they have considered themselves the most vital elements in the nation and in the name of freedom have really sought to advance their own interests and many of our intellectuals have become the staunchest defenders of the privileges of empire as soon as they had their share of the titles and power. What shall it profit the masses of this country — the peasantry, the landless labourers, the workers, the shopkeepers, the artisans — if every one of the offices held by Englishmen in India is held by Indians? It may benefit them a little as they can bring more pressure to bear on their own people than on alien government. But fundamentally this condition cannot improve until the social fabric is changed, and I think that the only effective change can be the formation of a democratic socialistic state. But even from the narrow point of view of our intellectuals, it is now well recognised that no effective pressure can be brought to bear on the British Government without mass support. But in spite of recognition there is the fear of

the masses and little is done. Mass support cannot come for a vague ideal of Swaraj. It can only come when the masses realise what Swaraj means for them. Therefore it is essential that we must clearly lay down an economic programme, must have an ultimate ideal in view and must also provide for the immediate steps to be taken to bring them relief.

Our ideals thus can only be an independent democratic state, and I would add a socialistic state; and for this we must work. What can be our methods? This is a revolutionary change from present conditions and revolutionary changes cannot be brought about by reformist tactics and methods. The reformer who is afraid of radical change or of overthrowing an oppressive regime and seeks merely to eliminate some of its abuses, becomes in reality one of its defenders. We must, therefore, cultivate a revolutionary outlook, one that devises a radical and far-reaching change, and not merely that halting outlook of the half-hearted reformer. The way of violence not being open to us in our present conditions, the only other course is some form of non-cooperation. Everything that goes towards creating a revolutionary atmosphere helps everything that lessens its hindrances. I use the word 'revolutionary' in its proper sense without any necessary connection with violence. Indeed, violence may be, and I think this is today in India the very reverse of revolution. Acts of terrorism of a hero have counter-revolutionary effect and for this reason alone, apart from any other reasons, are injurious to the national cause. No nation has yet been built upon such individual acts of terrorism.

There was a great controversy in this country some years ago on the merits of Council entry and the echoes of it still linger. It almost became a creed, a religious issue, a matter of faith. But the sole test of this, as of others, is the reaction it produces on the national mind. I can quite conceive work in the councils helping us to produce the right atmosphere in some measure. But it will only do so if it is carried on in the right spirit and with the ideal always in view, not with the desire to pursue better reformist tactics. I must confess, however, that the able and decorous parliamentarians who throng our councils cannot be mistaken for revolutionaries anywhere.

But you will tell me that all this may be very good but it is very vague. The real problem before you is how to exorcise communalism. I have already indicated to you the kind of India that I should like to build up. There is no place for communalism or dogma-ridden people in it. Communalism, of course, has to be fought ruthlessly and suppressed. But I really do not think that it is such a power as it is made out to be. It may be a giant today, but it has feet of clay. It is the outcome largely of anger and passion and when we regain our

tempers it will fade into nothingness. It is a myth with no connection with reality and it cannot endure. It is really the creation of our educated classes in search of office and employment. How does the economic interest of a Hindu or Muslim or Sikh differ from each other? Certainly not because they have to profess different faiths. It may be that if there is a vacancy for a judgeship of a High Court, or a like occasion, the raising of the communal issue may profit an individual. But how does it generally profit his community? What does it matter to the Muslim peasant whether a Hindu or Muslim is a judge in Lahore? Economic interests run along different lines. There is a great deal in common between the Muslim and Sikh and Hindu zamindars; and a great deal in common between the Muslim and Sikh and Hindu peasantry; and very little in common between a Muslim peasant and a Muslim zamindar. We must, therefore, begin to think of and act on common economic issues. If we do so, the myth of communalism will automatically disappear. Conflict there may be, but it will be between different classes and not different religions.

What communal interests are sought to be protected? I think fundamentally they are cultural. Every country in the world has cultural minorities and it is a well-recognised principle that such minorities should have the fullest autonomy so far as their culture is concerned. So also in India every considerable cultural group should be given freedom and, indeed, should be encouraged to preserve and cultivate its culture. Only thus can we build up a rich and varied and yet common culture for India. Culture would include the question of language, education and schools.

If this question of culture is settled satisfactorily, and sufficient safeguards are provided for the interests of minorities and groups which may be in danger of suppression, what remains of communalism? If in addition we replace our present system of territorial election by some method of selection by economic units, we not only introduce a more efficient and progressive system, but also do away with the problem of joint and separate electorates and the reservation of seats. It is generally recognised now, or it ought to be, that separate electorates, which are meant to protect the interests of minorities, really injure them and reduce their effective power in the State. If anybody should be against that, it is the minority. But such is the power of a myth that many of us have come to believe that separate electorates are a "valued privilege" to which we must cling on. I think a little clear thinking will convince any person who is not a bigot on the subject that separate electorates are not only a danger to the State but specially to the minority community. Personally, I am not in favour of territorial election at all,

but if it is retained I am wholly opposed to separate electorates.

I do not fancy reservation of seats on a communal basis either, but if this solution pleases people I would agree to it. We have to face realities, and the fact remains that many people feel strongly on these subjects. I am quite certain that any arrangement that may be arrived at will be of a provisional nature only. A few of us cannot bind down future generations and I trust that those who come after us will look upon all problems entirely free from all religious and communal taints. It is necessary, however, for such of us as do not believe in communalism and religion interfering with political and economic matters, to take up a strong attitude now and not permit the extremists to have it all their own way.

In the course of this fairly long address, I have referred very little to the Simon Commission. I have done so partly because the problem we have to face is a much bigger one and partly because none of you here want any convincing from me to boycott it. That boycott is going to continue in spite of the dejection of weak-hearted individuals and of well-meant attempts to "bridge the gulf."

The gulf will not be so easily bridged. And it is a folly to deceive ourselves that it can be easily bridged. Before a new bridge is built on the basis of friendship and cooperation, the present chains which tie us to England must be severed. Only then can real cooperation take place. It may be that a few of us are over-keen even now to find a way to lead them to the pleasant and sheltered paths of cooperation. If so they are welcome to them but they will be to none of us. We shall carry on this boycott regardless of back-sliders. But a boycott of the commission confined to public meetings and resolutions is the feeblest of methods. How can we make it really effective?

A boycott of British goods has been suggested and we are fully entitled to have it. I hope we shall carry it on to the best of our ability. But we must know that such a general boycott, justified as it is on sentimental grounds, cannot take us far. The only real thing that can be boycotted is British cloth. Can we bring about an effective boycott of British cloth? The present position stated roughly is, I believe, as follows: our mills in India produce one-third of the cloth consumed by us; our handloom weavers produce another third and we import from foreign countries the remaining third, of this over 90 per cent being English.

There is a strong movement in the country today to boycott British cloth only. This is perfectly justified and if we could do so we would force the hands of England. But there is the serious danger of our failing to do so. If we permit other foreign cloth to come in, British cloth will then creep in the guise of Japanese or some other foreign

cloth and it will be impossible both for the ordinary purchaser or the retailer to distinguish between the two. This practical difficulty seems to be inseparable and it would thus appear that in order to boycott British cloth we must boycott all foreign cloth. Another advantage this would bring us would be that *khadi* and mill cloth in India would cooperate with each other for the boycott. If we favour other foreign cloth, there can be no cooperation between the mills and the *khadi* producers in India. We must therefore concentrate on the boycott of all foreign cloth, thereby also helping tremendously our manufacture. A boycott of foreign cloth today really means boycott of British cloth. It means our displacing one-third of the cloth we consume and which comes from foreign countries by cloth manufactured by us. This should offer no great difficulty, if our *khadi* organisation and our cotton mills cooperate in the task instead of competing with each other. It is well known that *khadi* can be produced in almost unlimited quantities at short notice if there is demand for it. Our mills even with their existing machinery can also greatly increase their output. Thus there is no doubt that we are in a position to produce enough to boycott foreign cloth totally and in the near future, provided only the will to do so is present. It is for the public to express this will. If they do so, all other difficulties will disappear. We cannot expect those who profit by the import of foreign cloth to feel enthusiastic over the boycott; it must cause loss to the importers and others in the trade. But are we to sacrifice the interests of India and her millions for the sake of a handful of importers? Most of our millowners also have not a good record. They have in the past sought to profit by national sentiment in India, they have collected enormous dividends and yet have treated piteously the poor workers who were the foundations of their fortunes. Today instead of combating foreign cloth, many of them are competing with coarse *khadi* and are thus profiting even by the *khadi* sentiment of the people. If they could see far enough and knew their real interest, they would realise that their progress is bound up with the goodwill of the people, and their whole-hearted cooperation in the boycott would benefit them even more than it would the nation as a whole. But this cooperation can only be based on full justice to the workers in their mills and the minimum of profit.

An effective boycott is clearly possible with *khadi* and Indian mill cloth cooperating. Even if only a few millowners are agreeable to our conditions we can work with them, and I am sure that others will be drawn into our movement later. But if there is to be no cooperation with the mills, what can we do then? Our duty is clear. We must, by concentrating on *khadi* only, bring these misguided owners to reason

and make this boycott of cloth as effective as we can.

I have in an earlier part of this address referred to the coming industrialism in India and have stated that I believe it to be an inevitable process. I have no objection to the big or small machine and I think that properly used they can be made to serve man and not to dominate over him. And yet I have advocated the use of *khadi* also. I have done so, because I am convinced that in our present conditions and in the future for some time, *khadi* is a boon to the poverty-stricken millions of India. I cannot say if *khadi* will be necessary for us in the distant future. But I can say that today it supplies a very real want and wherever it has been produced, it has brought a measure of well-being in its train. The theory of its being an ideal auxiliary to agriculture would prove this; but if there was any doubt, our experience and the evidence of our eyes has removed it utterly. To bring immediate relief to our long-suffering peasantry and to make India more self-sufficient in the matter of cloth, *khadi* today is essential. The necessity for *khadi* is even greater in case of war or crisis, when automatically foreign imports will cease. How can we satisfy our needs then; our mills will make vast profits, prices of cloth will soar up and our poor folk will practically have to go naked. Only *khadi* will meet the situation then. It will supply the growing demand and will force the mills to keep their prices down. So even from the point of view of war, *khadi* is a necessity.

But if war comes, and everything indicates that it will come before long, we shall have to face other and more vital problems than that of boycott of foreign cloth. The Madras Congress has given us a lead in this matter and it is for this province to ponder over this lead, for the real burden of action will fall on the Punjab. You and your gallant soldiers have been exploited enough in the past, not in India only, but in the four quarters of the world. Even today they are made to do the dirty work of British imperialism in China, in Persia and in Mesopotamia, and they are used to suppress people who are our friends and neighbours and who have done us no harm. It is time that we put an end to this shameful exploitation of the courage of our manhood. We are told that we are not capable of defending our country against the foreign invasion, but our soldiers are capable enough of defending the British Empire, in Europe, in Asia and in Africa. You know how our man-power and our wealth were exploited by the British during the last war. You know also the measure of return that we got for our help; it was the Rowlatt Act and Martial Law in the Punjab. Are you prepared to be deluded again, to be exploited again and to be thrown into the scrap-heap again? Wise men, they say, profit by the failures

and experience of others, ordinary men by their own experience, and fools by neither. We may not be very wise, but let us not be fools either. Let us make up our mind now what we shall do when a crisis comes. Let us decide that whatever else we may or may not do, we shall not permit ourselves to be exploited by British imperialism. Let us say with the Madras Congress that, if the British Government embarks on any warlike adventure and endeavours to exploit India, it will be our duty to refuse to take any part in such a war or to cooperate with them in any way whatsoever. This will be no easy matter. It will mean our having to face and endure fines and hardship, but if we have the courage to face them and the capacity to endure them to the end and the statesmanship not to compromise, we shall emerge triumphant from this ordeal and our dear country which has so long suffered alien domination will be free again.

3. On the Punjab Provincial Conference¹

The Provincial Conference at Amritsar was certainly a very evident sign of the reviving political life of the province. It was a living and enthusiastic body, over-exuberant perhaps, and discussions in the Subjects Committee were keen. Some of the decisions of the conference were, perhaps, not very desirable and there was an element of irresponsibility in them. Instead of passing over 20 resolutions, I would have far preferred three or four important resolutions only, which could have been put into practice immediately. But, unhappily, we seem to attach more importance to resolutions than to subsequent action. I wish that our workers would remember a famous dictum of Lenin. He said that the proper execution of even the most unimportant measure was more important to the existence of Soviet Russia than all theory; more important than ten Soviet resolutions. Even so, it is far more important for the freedom of India to work and act methodically a little than to talk a lot and pass resolutions.

A noticeable tendency of the conference was against all communalism. The last two months have shown, even more than before, that the Congress cannot expect any effective cooperation in national work from either the Muslim League or the Hindu Mahasabha or any other communal organisation. The attitude of the Muslim League at Delhi was one of noncooperation with the Congress and other groups. The Hindu Mahasabha at Jubbulpore has also shut all doors leading to cooperation and progress. And yet, strangely, all these communalists swear in the

1. Interview at Lahore, 15 April 1928. *The Tribune*, 19 April 1928.

name of nationalism. No sensible person, I hope, is taken in by these pious professions. Even some of our Sikh brothers declare themselves against communalism, but their words and actions often show that the taint is present. If any community tries to domineer over the others, there can be no peace or progress. The time has come when people should resolutely set themselves against all aspects of communalism and I feel confident that they will succeed in suppressing it.

4. Presidential Address at the Banaras District Conference¹

I have been thinking since the morning what I should say to you. I have also asked my friends about the problem. Everybody knows that I cannot make speeches. I feel nervous when asked to make a speech. Therefore I just want to talk to you. The notices distributed claim that I shall speak about my tour abroad. I lived abroad for two years and returned four months ago. I found that in Russia and elsewhere even the poorest of the poor live well, wear good clothes and reside in well-built houses. The condition of the poor in our country is deplorable. Here the rich are no better than the poor in other countries. Once upon a time our country was rich. Greedy for wealth, the English came. Through trade, they managed to establish their hold upon the land. They also practised some fraudulent measures with the result that they became rich and we were impoverished. The English traded deftly with other countries as well but most of their wealth was gained from us. It is useless to blame them for this. They looked after their own interests. Other countries do the same. Perhaps, in such circumstances, we would behave in the same way. We were fools. The English let us fight among ourselves and gradually established themselves here.

We want the *Panchayati Raj* in our country. We want ours to be a land of labourers with government in the hands of the working class. Today power is in the hands of the rich or of a privileged class. In Russia and certain other countries this system of government has been done away with. Russia is now a land of the working classes.

A man who does not produce anything or does neither physical nor mental work is a burden on the nation. Zamindars, money-lenders, capitalists and beggars are all a drag on the country. Even the kisans are becoming a burden in certain respects as much of their time is spent in idleness. If they spun in their spare time they would not be so poor. Conditions have changed in the villages that have taken to the

1. Sixth Session: 28 April 1928. Aaj, 30 April 1928. Original in Hindi.

charkha. If Indians began to weave their own cloth then the English would have to suffer a hard loss of about 70 crores. All our trade has been taken from us. If the *charkha* finds favour, many of our countrymen can find employment once more.

What is Swaraj? Merely the appointment of Indians to important posts will not bring Swaraj. Your District Collector is an Indian. However good or bad he is, that will not mean Swaraj. Swaraj will not be obtained through flattery, nor will the British give it for the asking. The only way to gain it is to put pressure on the British. Let them realise that if they do not give self-government to the Indians they will suffer heavier losses. The noncooperation movement was organised with this purpose. Noncooperation includes non-payment of taxes. We might even have to do that for Swaraj. We will have to face many difficulties. But usually *khadi* work requires few or no sacrifices. Please wear *khadi*. By so doing, you will be able to get rid of your poverty as well as pressurize the English so that India may obtain Swaraj. This is our only weapon at present: to boycott foreign cloth and to use *khadi* instead.

It is said that a war is imminent. We helped the British in the last war. A million of our people fought — many were killed and as many injured. As a result we had the Rowlatt Act. I ask you if you intend to make the same mistake in the coming war. It is your duty not to cooperate with them in this war. Please be prepared to brave any difficulties you may be faced with in this connection.

Turkey and Afghanistan have made considerable progress within a short period. The reason is that they are independent. We should try to treat all Indians as equals and give up the distinctions between high and low. Every one should be given equal opportunity to progress.

5. On Politics and Religion¹

I have just read the special statement issued by the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Maharashtra Conference and the President and the Secretary of the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee², in explanation of the attitude taken up by the Maharashtra Conference

1. Statement to the press. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 17 May 1928.

2. They had said: "The principle of divorce of religion and politics recently advocated by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, was found acceptable by the Subjects Committee..."

in regard to social and communal problems. My name has been mentioned in this statement in support of the contention that religion and politics should be divorced from each other, and certain conclusions which appear to me remarkable, have been drawn from this premise. I have certainly referred to this subject repeatedly in my public utterances but my words must have been lacking in clarity to have led some people to imagine the very reverse of what I intended. I have stated that the so-called religion in India today encroaches on every department of life — political, social, economic, cultural — and I have taken strong exception to this and have expressed a wish that it should not be permitted to make this encroachment. If religion, or rather what is called religion, in India continues to interfere with everything, then it will not be a mere question of divorcing it from politics, but of divorcing it from life itself.

If the high priests of religion and the shining lights of communal organisations are to decide the question of untouchability and all other social problems, the division of provinces and the methods of election and similar problems, what exactly is the function of the National Congress or of other political organisations? The Congress might as well liquidate itself instead of continuing an existence which is humiliating and futile. It will not discuss the live problems of the day; it will only carry on an academic debate on such subjects as the communal organisations in their wisdom agree to leave to the Congress.

This is an intolerable position for the least of our organisations. For the Congress, it is unthinkable. Indeed the Congress has always in the past taken a lead in social and communal matters and I am sure it will continue to do so unless it wants to commit *harakiri* or to die of inanition. Perhaps there is no subject on which it has taken up a stronger attitude than the one of untouchability, and to say today that this is outside the purview of the Congress because it smacks of religion, is an amazing assertion. The Congress has also taken up a clear and definite attitude in regard to the redistribution of provinces, the separation of Sind, and the methods of election and representation. It is open to the Congress to change its opinion if it chooses. But it is not open to any one to say that such and such subjects are outside the scope of the Congress. The Congress does not acknowledge the right of the British Parliament to interfere with us politically or otherwise; much less is it likely to agree to any dictation or interference from religious or communal organisations in the social or economic sphere.

The Congress stands for Indian freedom, the freedom of the entire people of India, not the freedom of a class only which will dominate over other classes and while it carries on the struggle for political free-

dom and against political reaction, it strives equally for social freedom and against social reaction. In particular, it has declared war against untouchability and all that it implies. And neither of the two struggles admits of any compromise. There can be only one end to them: complete political freedom or independence, and complete social freedom, that is, the right of every man and woman to have the fullest opportunity for development without any restrictions or barriers of religion, caste, custom or economic privilege.

6. Presidential Address at the Kerala Provincial Conference¹

I thank you for the honour you have done me. I do not know if I can be of much service to you, as I am ignorant of your local conditions and problems; but the call of beautiful Malabar was too strong to be resisted. For long years I have wished to visit this land of beauty and when your behest came I gladly agreed to undertake the journey of 2,000 miles from my northern home.

We must examine the very foundation of our political, social and religious beliefs. It is not enough for us to find temporary patch-work remedies for long-standing grievances.

This is no easy task and I am not presumptuous enough to imagine that I am fitted for it. But I do feel that although we discuss our everyday political problems so often we pay little heed to the deeper issues, and I shall only venture to draw your attention to some of these.

We are thoroughly dissatisfied with our present condition and we rightly seek to better it. But what manner of Swaraj or independence we are going to have we seldom seek to enquire.

However, before we proceed on this enquiry, we must discard all prejudices and preconceived notions even though they come in the garb and with the sanctity of religion or ancient custom. We can only face the issue if we dare to think unhampered by sentiment and are prepared to go to the logical limits of our thought. 'Life', said Deshbandhu Das "is greater than logic", and no one can deny the truth of this statement. Our best laid schemes go wrong because life is required to follow the dictates of our cold logic. Human reason and logic are still weak supports for us, but unhappily we have no better guides. And so weak

1. Payyanur, 27 May 1928. *The Hindu*, 28 May 1928.

and frail as they are, we have to rely on them, taking care that when life moves away from them we have to think afresh and fashion ourselves accordingly.

We must notice at the very beginning that our society is suffering from a terrible stagnation and inertia. The very factors which made for its strength in the past are now a heavy load on its back which prevents it from going forward or adapting itself to present-day conditions. And the very basis of this society is authority — authority of sacred books, of old customs, of immemorial habits. On the strength of this authority we presume to treat many of our brothers as untouchables, and we adhere to many customs which, our reason tells us, are not good.

We claim freedom for our country. Can we deny that freedom to large masses living in this country? If the worship of authority has brought us to our present low state and our nation to misery, should we not challenge the foundations of that authority and try to evolve a new order wherein the millions who inhabit this country may have all shackles removed from them and may have a fair chance of living a happy and harmonious life.

We may be told that all this is not practical politics. It is a profitless search for a Utopia and we would better occupy ourselves in dealing with the problems of the immediate present. But the practical politicians have singularly failed to solve our everyday problems and practical politics divorced from ideals and a vision of the goal are apt to lead us, as they have so often done in the past, into the morass of nowhere. To refuse to consider what is ultimately desirable and possible is to invite failure and disaster. A loss of belief in ideals means a relapse into barbarism and must result in a cynical opportunism.

How far are the evils of the modern West due to industrialism? Industrialism means the use of machinery, of tools to lessen human labour and it seems a little unreasonable to blame our tools when the fault lies with us in misusing them. Industrialism certainly has produced evils but it may be that these evils are due to the system under which industrialism has flourished and not so much to industrialism itself. That system is capitalism and under its evil influence the very progress that science has made has been prostituted and the beauty of life has been sacrificed to a mad race for profit and wealth. The foundation of a good society cannot be perpetual conflict and competition; nor can it be the senseless production of vast quantities of unnecessary goods which we are made to buy by the clever methods of modern advertisement. A good society can only be based on cooperation and the freedom of each individual to develop to the best of his capacity without any barriers of economic or political or religious privileges.

Our aim must be a society from which the wasteful and competitive activities of individuals are lessened, where there is more cooperation and what is done is good in itself and what is produced is worth producing, not for profit, but because it is good and worth having.

India has little in common with England and her economic interests conflict in almost every particular with those of England. An imperial bond between the two can only be an enforced union productive of ill-will and continuous friction and must of necessity be to the advantage of England.

For the present, however, the union must necessarily be the union of the lion and lamb, with the lamb inside the lion. This is evident if we study the relation of England with other countries like China, Persia, Mesopotamia and Egypt. She has opposed all attempts at freedom of these countries and only recently we had an amazing example of her imperial policy in independent Egypt. Even in regard to the countries of Europe, she is acknowledged to be the main obstacle to world peace and cooperation. It is inconceivable, therefore, that India can have a real measure of freedom within the limits of the British Empire and you will welcome, I am sure, the resolution of the Madras Congress laying down our goal as complete national independence. This does not mean ill-will to England or to any other country, but it is a condition precedent to our future growth and to the development of peaceful relations with other countries including England. The Madras Congress resolution is important specially because it attacks the psychology of submission and slavery and helplessness, which generations of foreign rule have developed in us. It prepares our minds for the will to be free without which freedom cannot come even today. There are so many of us who take an academic interest in Indian freedom, who while they talk of freedom feel no inner urge for it. Doubts and difficulties assail them and fear born of a slave psychology hampers their efforts. We are told of the dangers that India may have to face in the event of England leaving us to our own resources, of the fear of foreign invasion and of our inability to cope with it. But it is not realised that the strength that succeeds in enforcing India's will on England also succeeds in protecting India from other foreign incursions. It is not felt keenly enough that we are even now suffering under a foreign invasion and the future cannot bring any greater disaster to us. Not to get rid of our present domination because of future problematical dangers is the height of fear and weakness. But what external dangers will face us when the British leave India? We have an Indian army brave and efficient, well-tried in many continents. It is good enough to fight for the freedom of the Allies in the battlefields of Eu-

rope and it will be good enough to fight if necessary for the freedom of India. When freedom comes, we shall develop our army and strengthen it and make it more efficient than it is today. We have seen during the Great War how vast armies can grow up in time of need.

The strength of the country depends not only on the defence force but even more so on the international situation and the balance of power. Poland, Lithuania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Austria, Belgium, Holland, Yugoslavia, Portugal, Bulgaria, Rumania and many other countries are independent, but not one of them can withstand one great Power. Even the great Powers cannot separately cope with the combination against them; but they remain independent because none dare attack them for fear of complications. The other countries could not tolerate that the rich prize of India should fall again to another Power. But what power could indeed threaten us? France, Germany and Italy are too much involved in their mutual hatred and jealousies and are too afraid of each other to trouble us at all. The United States of America is too far away for effective action. Japan has to face the hostility of the United States and even of the Western European Powers and cannot dare to embark on a new adventure, which would be fraught with the greatest risks for her. Afghanistan is strong in defence but weak in attack and it is inconceivable that with its limited resources it can do us any harm. It may at most carry out a number of successful raids before we can defeat it and hold it in check. But there is absolutely no reason why we should have any such relations with Afghanistan. Russia remains the sole danger but even this danger is largely imaginary, as every one knows, or ought to know, that no country is in greater need of peace than Russia. The Great War, the civil war, the famine and the blockade have shaken her foundations and done her tremendous injury. She has made good much of her losses but above everything else she desires peace to build up the new social order she has established. Experts tell us that although strong in defence she is weak in attack. Her whole government is based on the goodwill of the workers and the peasantry and she cannot count on this goodwill in an oppressive campaign. She has so many enemies that she dare not of her own accord start an invasion of India and leave her western flanks exposed to attack. Nor has she any economic reason to covet India. India and Russia are too alike to help each other much. Both are largely agricultural countries with raw materials and markets. She wants capital and machinery and India can supply neither. We thus see that no danger threatens India from any direction and even if there is any danger we shall be able to cope with it.

It may be, however, that we are unable to cope with it and go down

in the struggle. That risk must be faced as it has been faced by every brave people in history. Because of risk, we cannot give up our birth-right or take the shameful position of asking for the British help to defend our country and liberty. We must make it clear that on no account are we prepared to have the British forces in our country. The alien army of occupation must be withdrawn.

It is said that by laying stress on Independence, we antagonise other parties in the country just when the need for unity was the greatest. Unity is certainly most desirable, but can unity be achieved by the sacrifice of our principles? Our opponents and even those of our colleagues for whose sake we sacrifice our principles will respect us the less for it. Let us respect the sentiments and even the prejudices of others. But let us not give in on any matter which we consider vital. The Congress has already shown its desire to cooperate, whenever it can, with other groups and parties without giving up our ideals and our goal. We have cooperated wholeheartedly with others for the boycott of the Simon Commission and are today cooperating with numerous groups in the All Parties Conference. We could give no greater evidence of our goodwill, and our tolerance cannot extend to sacrifice of the principle and the goal; and the ideal we have set before us is too vivid to be forgotten or discarded for a temporary compromise. We have to travel the road together respecting each other and it may be that when we reach the crossroads we may have converted many others to our view. If we fail to do so, we would agree to differ and part company without rancour or ill-will.

You must have been disappointed at the proceedings of the All Parties Conference in Bombay and yet the very fact that we are having so much difficulty in finding a solution to contending claims shows that we are at grips with the real problems. By ignoring them or making a patch-work compromise we cannot solve them. It is a measure of our earnestness that we are trying to face them squarely, and I have every hope that if we continue to do so, we shall find a solution.

What are these problems we hear of — controversies about the separation of Sind and separate and joint electorates and reservation of seats? If you go to the bottom of all this, you find one all-pervading cause. It is the fear of the Muslim that the Hindu may exterminate him, the fear of the Hindu that the Muslim may crush him, the fear of each community or group. It is a senseless fear. To protect itself, each community wants a privileged and dominating position in each province. Surely no group should dominate over another; and the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League each desire domination and there can be no compromise between the two. Are we then to give up the task as

hopeless? The duty of the Congress and of all other organisations which are not based on pure communalism is clear. After paying due regard to the fears, whether justified or not, they must evolve a constitution which should be as just and reasonable as can be expected under the circumstances and then should place it before the country. And the country as a whole, I feel sure, will accept it if it is based on reason and justice.

Unhappily it is not possible in this world of ours today to produce an ideal constitution. We cannot ignore prejudice and unreason, but let us at any rate try to approximate to the ideal as far as we can. The history of India tells us that danger has always come because of the want of central authority. We have too much of decentralisation. If we are to build up a strong India, we must have a strong Central Government but at the same time we cannot afford to kill the rich and varying cultures of India by having too much uniformity and discouraging local effort and enterprise. In other countries, the tendency today is to give full local autonomy to cultural areas. We must, therefore, while laying stress on a strong Central Government, accept the principle of giving considerable autonomy to different areas having traditions and cultures of their own. The best test of a culture is that of language. There may be too many small autonomous areas. The economic life of the country may suffer; but this can be safeguarded by giving up powers to large areas including several autonomous cultural areas. If this principle is kept in mind and if in addition we have joint electorates and proper safeguards for all the minorities and backward groups, I think we might evolve a satisfactory constitution for a period at least. Let us hope that the committee which the All Parties Conference has appointed will meet with success in drawing up this Constitution.

It is becoming clear that the Indian States cannot be ignored or excluded. Nothing can be more fatal for India than a division between the two entities. The problem has become an urgent one because we find that efforts are being made to raise a barrier between the two parts of India. Recently a scheme² has been published on behalf of a number of Indian princes under a superficial garb of goodwill to British

2. Early in 1927 the rulers of Indian States pressed for the appointment of a special committee to examine their relations with the Paramount Power. In December 1927 Sir Harcourt Butler was appointed the Chairman of the Indian States Committee. The princes claimed that they were sovereign rulers except to the extent that they had expressly surrendered any portion of their sovereignty and demanded direct relations between the States and the British Crown. The committee, which submitted its report in February 1929, rejected the theory of residuary sovereignty but accepted the doctrine of direct relations between the States and the Crown.

India. This scheme lays down the dangerous principle of separation of Indian States and so far as the people of the States are concerned, we are told they will live under a rule of law. We know well what rule of law and order means. This scheme must, therefore, be combated by us not only in British India but in the States. Even such of the ruling princes as are wise and foreseeing enough should reject it and take their stand by their own people and by the people of British India. We stand together and nothing must be allowed to separate us.

I have tried to examine the general position in which India stands today and have stated some principles which should guide us in our work. We have to prepare and work for a socialistic Indian republic cooperating with other countries to produce a cooperative world commonwealth. We have to discard the evil customs and habits that cling to us and specially to bring about equality of opportunity between all the men and women that inhabit this country. We have to fight and overcome everything that is a barrier to this equality — untouchability and many other social customs, the exploitation of the worker and the peasant by the capitalist and the landlord. From the West we have to learn much, specially science and the scientific spirit. But there is also much in the West today which we have to avoid.

Are we likely to attain this ideal, or even to go a step in the right direction with the help of the Simon Commission? Does the Commission or the British Parliament have this ideal? It is patent that we have nothing in common and our ways are entirely separate. No question of cooperation can thus arise. You will, I have no doubt, continue vigorously the boycott of the Commission which India has so far carried on with such great success.

There is thus only one course open to us. We must lay stress on hand-spun and hand-woven *khaddar* only in order to boycott foreign cloth. We must thus make it clear to the mill owners that their own interests demand that they should cooperate with nationalist India and not with the alien government. When they have realised this they will be in a proper frame of mind to work with us. But that is not yet. We must therefore with all the vigour at our command work for *khaddar* and for the boycott of foreign cloth through *khaddar*.

You are no doubt aware of the great struggle³ that is going on in Bardoli. It is an economic struggle but there is little to distinguish economics from politics today. So also is the gallant struggle of the

3. A satyagraha campaign conducted successfully by Vallabhbhai Patel in Bardoli tahsil in Gujarat against enhancement of revenue.

mill workers of Bombay against great odds. Bardoli has ceased to be a merely provincial affair. The whole country is watching it with eager interest and I have no doubt that you will send your heartiest greetings and your best wishes to the gallant people of Bardoli who are facing jail and confiscation of property without flinching. It is Bardoli versus Britain, as a friend has put it, and all our sympathies go out to the little *taluka* which is challenging the might of an empire.

I have finished. I trust that the words I have uttered will induce you, not so much to agree with me in what I have said, but to provoke you to think of the soundness of such of our beliefs as we may consider fundamental. I should like you to be rebels in thought, critical of everything and accepting nothing which your reason does not accept.

7. Concluding Remarks at the Kerala Provincial Conference¹

It is the fashion sometimes to characterise every session of a conference or Congress as momentous or epoch-making. I do not like this and I do not think we have done anything momentous or epoch-making today. As for the resolution on independence, it seems to me that we have got into the habit of getting excited not over matters of practical politics but over merely academical questions. I should personally welcome the day when the Congress has developed strength sufficient to change the creed to one of independence. But our resolution was simply a recommendation to the Calcutta Congress and recommendations do not appeal to me. In my opinion men like Dadabhai Naoroji², Surendranath Banerjea³ and others must be called revolutionaries because they made possible the present political life by their courage and intrepidity in the old days when nobody dared to say anything.

1. Payyanur, 28 May 1928. *The Hindu*, 29 May 1928.

2. (1825-1917); Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, Elphinstone College, Bombay, 1854; Dewan of Baroda, 1873; author of *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*; Member, Bombay Legislative Council, 1885-1887; President of the Congress, 1886, 1893 and 1906; member of the British Parliament 1892-1895; member, Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure, 1896.

3. (1848-1925); joined I.C.S. 1871; dismissed 1874; editor, *Bengalee*, 1879-1919; member, Bengal Legislative Council, 1893-1901 and Central Assembly, 1913-1918; President of the Congress 1895 and 1902; left Congress in 1918 and started the Indian National Liberal Federation; Minister in Bengal, 1921-1923.

8. On the Political Situation in India¹

I am quite exhausted and my mind being almost perfectly blank, I have very little idea of what I shall say. I have been asked to speak on the present political situation in India, which is not a healthy subject, so far as I am personally concerned. The present political situation in India, to put it briefly, is that India happens to be under English domination and that there was some talk of achieving freedom.

As a subject nation under a foreign domination, we have been subjected to all sorts of humiliations and the fact remains that the urge to get rid of that domination has not been sufficiently realised by us. In spite of tall talk by politicians, public speeches, resolutions at conferences and editorials in newspapers, the urge for freedom has still to be created. Last year, I had occasion to attend a conference at Brussels. That conference was attended by people of several nationalities, who were struggling for political or social freedom as we in India. There were people from Africa, Mesopotamia, China and other places, and it was exceedingly interesting to study their views. Indians compared very favourably with them as far as intellectual capacity was concerned, but the solid fact remains that Indians have not got anywhere near the same level.

We have in India more of intellectual and philosophical men, who are considering schemes of action and inaction and who deliver heated speeches without any definite action. There is also excitement. But heat and excitement have found their way only into speeches and not in other directions. I referred to the Brussels Conference only to bring home to you the remarkable indifference of some of our leaders. That indifference, I will call a destructive indifference. There were no doubt exceptions, but India is unique with regard to her incapacity for action. It is really an axiom in politics, and it provides an opportunity for the English people to continue to govern India.

If there is really a strong urge in India to get freedom, we can obtain it. The noncooperation movement was for the purpose of creating that urge in India, and it really made that urge in India to a certain extent. Everyone of us realised, as a result of that movement, that we wanted freedom. Every organisation in the country speaks about it,

1. Speech at Calicut, 29 May 1928. *The Hindu*, 30 May 1928.

and it is said that all that is required is unity. Yet we find it extremely difficult to get on smoothly. The feeling for unity is not strong enough to overcome the destructive feeling for disunity. That is one conclusion I draw from the present political situation.

The Indian capitalists are bound hand and foot with British capitalists and Indian industries are undoubtedly run with 90 per cent of British capital and 10 per cent of Indian capital. Protection of Indian industry means protection of British capital. The Indian capitalists dare not offend British capitalists. There is not a single Exchange Bank in India. Almost all banks are English, except one or two. The Imperial Bank and the Exchange Banks can ruin any industry if they wanted, and it will be extremely difficult to resist that power. Indian capitalists occasionally create an agitation and shout for petty things like the ratio but they cannot go against British interests. If we were to analyse we would find that many classes cannot go against the British. Right at the bottom of the social scale, there are workers and labourers in factories. Those mostly interested in the fight for freedom are workers and peasantry and lower middle class intelligentsia. But most of us do not want Swaraj to come suddenly and are not in favour of any kind of revolution. We are also afraid of some changes which might upset our position and we do not want a radical change in our condition.

The noncooperation movement was started, about eight years ago, by the upper intelligentsia in India, who controlled it. There was a mass element in that movement and certainly it made the Congress a strong body. It was powerfully affected by the mass element, but most of the leaders became frightened and agitated. Nonetheless, we did not wholly appreciate that national mass movement. Later on, when the noncooperation movement gradually developed, the control of leaders became less and less, and they suspected the masses from the beginning. Then the liberal leaders kept themselves aloof from it. Thus while the masses became more and more aggressive, the leaders were less and less aggressive in their turn. The divorce between the masses and the leaders brought about the downfall of that movement. If we cannot really create the urge for freedom, while we feel the foreign domination as most humiliating, we cannot attain freedom. We have to define what kind of freedom we want. Many people in England have said that England is not free and that democracy in England is a sham with all kinds of propaganda and irregularities in elections, etc. A reaction has set in there against that so-called democracy. The political and economic ideas of Indians are those of Victorian times, and a generation or two behind the present democratic ideas of England.

The All Parties Conference is making valiant efforts at constitution-

making but I do not attach much importance to it, unless it tends to remove the present feeling of insecurity. We are a timid race. Once India gains freedom, she will draw up any kind of constitution suited to her conditions, regardless of the attempt made by the All Parties Conference of 1928.

The points I place before you will help you to realise the present political situation in India. We want a good deal of emotion and passion in the fight for Swaraj. There is an extraordinary ignorance in India of what is happening in the other parts of the world. Most of us are not in touch with what is happening in other countries for attaining freedom.

9. The Indian struggle¹

By habit and nature I am not a platform speaker and so I am going to give you more of a talk than an oration on the situation in the country. Politics today in a sense has become a thing of the past. It has become now all-comprehensive. The world is concerned much more with economic events than politics. They in the West talk of social revolution whereas in India we hear of social reform like untouchability etc. In Europe, they talk of Labour and Capitalism, both different aspects of the same thing. It is said that politics has passed away and the problems have entered into the daily life of men. In the olden days kings and dynasties warred against each other and that was pure politics and those events have entirely changed now. In India at the present day, economic and social questions are gradually forcing their way to the front covering a large space in the nation's life. If bread and butter cannot be provided for the masses what use then of talking politics?

We talk of the independence of India and in my opinion no country can think of independence as long as it has to depend for so many things on others. In that sense England is not an independent country, as it depends on others for many things. There is no question of absolute independence. It is not possible for India to really isolate herself and full freedom means only severance from British control. On the other hand, it does not mean no contact at all with Britain. That is left for Indians to choose. That question will arise after freedom has been attained.

1. Address at Palghat, 29 May 1928. *The Hindu*, 30 May 1928.

I will stress the point that we have to think internationally and should not cut ourselves off from the rest of the world. Each nation should cooperate with the other and should not exploit the other as is done at present. That cooperation must be based on understanding. It is for us to consider those problems and to be clear as to what kind of freedom we are to have, especially when three hundred millions are to share in that freedom.

There is no royal road to Swaraj. The potential strength of India remains a fact and India can become free the moment it decides that way. The question of violence and non-violence is absurd to my mind. The moment violence becomes necessary I will not hesitate to use it, but at present I do not think that violence will lead India to freedom. There is a condition precedent to all these and that is the creation of discipline and we must be prepared to take risks.

The boycott of British goods and the *khaddar* programme is a solid proposition and forms an auxiliary industry to use up wasted time. There are fifty-five lakhs of beggars in the country sponging upon the rich and well-to-do and according to a certain calculation five crores of agriculturists are idle for a portion of the year, enough to break the back of any country in the world. *Khadi* is the way to find work for these men. *Khadi* then is a sheer, solid, economic proposition; and in spite of all our best efforts it has not so far secured a nationwide popularity. We should consider that aspect as a weapon against England, as boycott was successfully used by China as a great weapon to hurt Hong Kong which is now reduced to a pitiable condition. The boycott is a weapon which any nation can use against any alien nation. It should be used internationally also. If we boycotted British cloth alone, it would flow into our country through other channels. Hence we must boycott all foreign cloth. The Bombay mill owners refuse to cooperate with us in the campaign and they are competing with *khadi*. That can not help the problem. It is up to us not to cooperate with the mill owners, who now get cooperation both from the government as well as from the people. Therefore we must show the mill owners that it is to their interest to side with Indian nationalism and not with British imperialism. We must carry out the boycott through *khadi* and that way lies the fight for freedom. I appeal to one and all of my listeners to make one little sacrifice by using *khaddar*, carry out the boycott programme in all vigour and to strengthen the political organisation in the country, the Indian National Congress.

10. The Landholders and Socialism¹

Sir,

Some little time ago I noticed a statement in the press, purporting to be signed by 50 zamindars and landholders of the Punjab, challenging some remarks which I had made at the Kerala Provincial Conference. Stress of work prevented me from devoting any time to this statement then but I have now hunted it out from old files of newspapers and read it with care and, may I say, with pleasure. The statement protests against my advocacy of socialism as applied to the land, but I am glad of it, because it shows that the Punjab landholders are at least beginning to think of some of the vital problems of the age. Out of this thought will surely arise some recognition of the unfairness and injustice of our present land laws and the misery they have caused to vast numbers of our countrymen, and this recognition must result in a desire to change them and lessen this misery. I feel confident that many of the landholders in the Punjab and elsewhere in India will then appreciate and commend the way of socialism.

The Punjab landholders are entirely right in pointing out that in their province the average landholder is not a big "landlord or capitalist, but a peasant with small holdings of land, upon which he lives and thrives." They have therefore little to fear from socialism or from the nationalisation of land, and this fear, it seems to me, is largely due to ignorance of what socialism is. My remarks at Kerala were largely directed to the big zamindars and taluqdars, and from their statement it appears that the Punjab landholders are in considerable agreement with me. They admit that it is wrong for an individual or small group to live in luxury on the exploitation of the masses. But they follow this up by imagining that nationalisation of land in the Punjab would result in the exploitation of the vast mass of Punjab landholders "for the comforts of a few, under false expressions of sympathy". What this means I am utterly unable to understand, nor have I any idea as to who these 'few' are likely to be.

What is nationalisation? It means that the ownership of the land vests in the nation or in society as a whole. As a matter of fact I believe it is claimed by the British Government in India that the ownership of land belongs to it. And so it has been stated and argued that

1. Letter to the Editor, 19 July 1928. *The Tribune*, 24 July 1928.

land revenue in India today is in the nature of rent. If this interpretation holds good, then, when the British Government gives way in India to a democratic Indian Government, it may be presumed that the ownership of the land will rest in theory with this Indian Government or with the Indian people as a whole. Do the Punjab landholders prefer that ownership of land should rest with an irresponsible British Government or with a responsible Indian Government, which must in the nature of things be largely composed of representatives of the agricultural population? Bardoli has exposed, if exposure was necessary, the strange ways of the British Government in India in enhancing the assessment on land on the reports of irresponsible officers who have no one to control or check them. Is it likely that an Indian Government will behave in this manner and thus anger the agriculturists of India who form the vast majority of the population?

Nationalisation does not necessarily mean the deprivation of the present landholders of their lands. It may mean certain restrictions on the right of alienation and on speculation in land. It certainly should not result in depriving peasant proprietors of their lands. But it may be and ought to be, and here the Punjab landholders would appear to agree with me, accompanied by other measures which would prevent an individual or a group from exploiting large number of others and living in luxury on their toil. The big zamindaris and *talukas* are based on this exploitation. They cannot therefore be tolerated and must go.

In practice therefore the socialisation of land in India would result in the creation of large numbers of peasant holders all over the country, each with a holding which he and his family can cultivate. The produce of this land will be theirs to do what they will. The land will remain in the family, and if the family dependent on the land increases it may even claim more land, subject of course to more land being available. Big holdings necessitating the employment of many outside labourers will not be encouraged, and there will be restrictions on the alienation of land. The change will thus not be such as the Punjab landholders have any reason to fear.

The principal change will be the breaking up of large zamindaris. Only the State, as representing the community, will directly hold some large areas which will be converted into model farms where experiments may be carried on for the benefit of the peasant holders.

The social injury caused by large zamindaris is well recognised all over the world now and everywhere, quite apart from socialism, efforts have been made to put an end to them. In many countries of Europe and elsewhere these efforts have succeeded. Even in Ireland it was a conservative government of Great Britain, I think, which put an end to the big

landlords but they provided for compensation to be given to them. The question therefore for India to consider is not whether big zamindaris should continue or not. They cannot continue if India is to progress. They are doomed. The only question for us is whether any compensation should be given for them or not. It is possible to give full compensation or part compensation or none at all. Personally I do not see the justice of giving any compensation to people who in the past, without doing any work themselves, profited out of all reason from the work of others. But apart from the justice of the case, I fail to see where we can find the enormous funds that will be necessary to compensate the dispossessed taluqdars and big zamindars.

Socialism is not such a terrible thing as perhaps some of the Punjab landholders imagine. A little study of it will make them change their opinion. Even today living as we do under a capitalist form of government society is being forced, by stress of circumstances, to socialise a host of undertakings. Our railways and post offices and roads and many other things have been nationalised. In England electricity is being socialised by a conservative government. Why not land?

Society is a living organism composed of myriads of human beings. Can it prosper if any part of it is diseased, or if any group of human beings live in misery and starvation? How long will the heart or the brain survive if the limbs of a body are paralysed? If the Punjab landholders and other zamindars will take the larger view, ultimately even the more selfish view, they will realise that their prosperity depends on the prosperity of others and specially the peasants of this country. They will not lose by socialism. And if it appear to them that they are losing something now, it will be more than counterbalanced by a larger and worthier inheritance which they will share with their fellow countrymen.

For ages past the peasantry of India have carried a heavy burden. They have for some generations made the world safe for British imperialism; on their uncomplaining toil a handful of persons have lived in idle luxury; out of their grinding poverty and misery money has been wrung out to build the palaces of Imperial Delhi and for the superficial magnificence of some of our big cities. But even the worm turns and a day will come when they will bear no more. In that struggle the Punjab landholders, who do not believe in the exploitation of the many by the few, will I trust be with them.

Jawaharlal Nehru

11. On the Zamindari Question¹

Sir,

In your issue of the 14th August Mr. Raghbir Singh has accused me of inconsistency and has sought to point out that what I said at the Kerala Conference is different from what I said in my recent letter which appeared in the *Tribune*. He imagines that I have changed my front altogether and have receded from the position I took up in Kerala. Allow me to assure him that I have done no such thing. I still adhere to everything, I am even more convinced than I was then of the necessity of changing our social structure completely and putting an end to the exploitation of man by man by the nationalisation of the means of production, that is, land and factories, and the means of distribution.

In my reply to the landholders' manifesto I had pointed out what nationalisation in practice would mean so far as the land was concerned. I agree that this would not be complete socialisation of land. That can only come when we have got rid of the "psychology of ages". But a very great step would be taken towards complete socialisation if the big zamindaris were abolished and there were small holdings, each landholder having just enough for his family to look after. This would automatically end a great deal of exploitation. I added that the landholder would not have the power to alienate his land.

Mr. Raghbir Singh accuses me of trying to create a split between the big zamindars and the small landholders. I was not consciously trying to create any such split, but I shall certainly welcome such a cleavage, as it would represent the economic facts of the situation. The split is indeed here, however much we may try to hide it, and the sooner we recognise it the better.

I do not wish to trespass too much on your courtesy or space. The subject is big enough for a treatise and a letter to a newspaper can hardly do justice to it. I would add, however, that Mr. Raghbir Singh has got somewhat mixed up in his ideas of Russia and Communism. I should like to know how he has got hold of the idea that the urban classes in Russia deprived the peasants of their lands. This is the first time I have heard of it and I have taken some trouble to study the Russian situation. It would be an excellent thing if Mr. Raghbir Singh

1. Letter to the Editor, *The Tribune*, 26 August 1928.

paid a visit to Russia and examined rural conditions on the spot. I am sure he would get rid of the "psychology of ages" soon enough then.

I have not said anything about communism in either my speech in Kerala or in my letter. But evidently Mr. Raghbir Singh sees red. I wonder if he knows what communism is. It is a philosophy of life and of the methods to be adopted to attain a certain end. The end is socialism. I have been discussing the end or the aim only, not the philosophy or the methods.

Whether I am injuring the cause of nationalism or not, it is not for me to say. But I am very sure that nationalism minus the nation, or rather minus the vast majority of the people, is something that I do not hanker after. The nation to me is the 95 per cent or 98 per cent or whatever the percentage may be, and not the 2 per cent or 5 per cent consisting of the big zamindars and capitalists and others of their kind.

Jawaharlal Nehru

12. On the Alleged Letter by M.N. Roy¹

When this letter was published in the press I could not of course say whether it was genuine or not. I do not know what Mr. Roy's² views

1. Lucknow, 1 September 1928. Defence Exhibit 148(5)—Meerut Conspiracy Case Papers. National Archives of India.
In August 1928, the government released to the press a letter, which M. N. Roy was said to have written on 30 December 1927, urging the C.P.I. to affiliate formally with the Comintern and the Workers and Peasants Party with the League against Imperialism and referring to Jawaharlal as the "liaison agent between Moscow and India". The letter was a forgery and Roy denounced it as such.
2. Narendra Nath Bhattacharya (1893-1954); better known as Manabendra Nath Roy, the name he adopted in 1916, was probably born in 1893; estimates of his birth range from 1886 to 1893; was an important member of the Jugantar Party; left India in 1915 and participated in revolutionary movements in Mexico and in European countries; in 1919 founded the Mexican Communist Party; attended the second World Congress of the Comintern in 1920; in 1927 went to China as the representative of the Comintern; differed from the Comintern in 1928, returned to India in 1930, was arrested and sentenced to six years' imprisonment; joined Congress for a short period; later founded the Radical Democratic Party and the Indian Federation of Labour; supported the government during the Second World War; after his break with communism, became one of the principal exponents of Radical Humanism.

may be in regard to communist work in India. It struck me as peculiar, however, that this letter which is said to be dated some time in December last should suddenly be given publicity 8 months later. On the face of it the letter contains statements which appeared improbable. The manner and time of publication increased the element of suspicion. The Trades Disputes Bill and the so-called anti-Bolshevik measure coming at about the same time made it clear that the publication was designed to frighten a number of people and thus facilitate passing of the measures. The cablegram I received from Berlin stating that after inquiry it has been found that the letter is a fabrication, justifies the suspicion that it raised. I trust that no one will be deluded by this letter, whether it is genuine or not.

The two new measures introduced by government are objectionable and should be opposed. The trade union movement in India is very young and the Trades Dispute Bill endeavours to weaken and cripple it in its infancy. This cannot be willingly permitted. I am glad to say the Congress Working Committee today has expressed strong opinions against both these measures.

13. Presidential Address at the Delhi Provincial Political Conference¹

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that he had absolutely nothing to do with the Simon Commission. He had ceased to think of it, much less talk about it.

He divided the Nehru report into three parts, i.e. communal, general, and the controversy between Dominion Status and Independence. Discussing the communal aspect, he asserted that the report not only embodied a carefully thought-out and worked-out scheme, but the decisions incorporated agreements among all the people concerned. The real trouble had been with regard to the questions of Sind, reservation of seats for the majority community in the Punjab and Bengal and joint electorates. All these three points were settled by agreements by the parties concerned. The Sind agreement was

1. Meerut, 13 October 1928. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 20 October 1928. The speech was delivered in Hindi.

signed not only by the Hindus and Muslims concerned but also by Maulana Shaukat Ali and Shafi Daudi who are now most unaccountably trying to discredit it. Their memories must be short. The Punjab agreement was similarly solved by unanimous agreement among the Punjab delegates, subject to a note by the Sikhs. Why people should carry on an agitation against it, passed his comprehension. But it was obvious that the general feeling in the country was amazingly in favour of the solutions. He hoped that the conference would strongly approve of them and ask for their complete adoption by the country.

Even more than the solution he welcomed the new spirit of compromise at Lucknow. People now realized that the good of the country was inextricably bound up with the good of the whole. That spirit was a certain sign of better times.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru referred to the clause in the fundamental rights guaranteeing a living wage. He approved of it throughout but liked to know how the Nehru Committee and the conference proposed to give effect to it. Where would they get the vast funds necessary? They could get them from the richer classes who were in superfluity of good things in the world. But the report assured them all rights to property and titles. It might be said that increased production would leave more money at their disposal. But under the present circumstances that money would go to the landlords and capitalists. The only possible solution was offered by socialism, i.e. equalization, as far as possible of income and control by the State of means of production and distribution. It followed that there must not be big zamindars and big factories must be owned by the State. That was the only way to ensure a living wage for all. If all vested interests were protected, it was impossible to provide a living wage.

On the Dominion Status versus Independence controversy Pandit Nehru remarked that the tendency of the Nehru Committee was to limit the liberty of action of those who stood for independence and glorify the Nehru Report. Other developments also pointed painfully to the general withdrawal from the position of independence. He specially referred to the recent report that members of the Congress party in the Central Legislature were permitted to sign the Viceroy's book. One could see gradually that the spider's web of imperialism was catching even Congressmen. The whole matter of the constitution was not one for legal quibbles as to whether Dominion Status conceded some amount of freedom or not.

Freedom was not going to be won by nice points made by lawyers. It was to be attained by developing the will for power. We were

up today against imperialism. Did Dominion Status promise us to be relieved from it? It was all very well to say that by getting Dominion Status we should change the composition of the British Empire and imperialism would disappear or decrease. The British Commonwealth of Nations was the strongest exponent of imperialism. We would not demolish it under Dominion Status. He objected also to asking for Dominion Status on the ground that they feared the consequences of independence. This meant that they were accepting Dominion Status under duress. He did not want India to accept anything under compulsion. The right moment for accepting Dominion Status might come after independence had been attained and India was free to choose what she liked best. Moreover, the scheme would not develop a desire for freedom and capacity for sacrifice and, more dangerous still, it would make the people imagine that no sanction was necessary for it.

The question of violence and nonviolence had been debated in this country almost from the religious point of view. Undoubtedly, violence was a bad thing and the chief grievance of the socialists against capitalism was that it developed violence and war.

He declared that they wanted a world as far as possible without wars and violence; but violence, though utterly bad, was preferable to slavery. If India was convinced that she could become free through violence, she would undoubtedly have the right to indulge in it as other countries have done. The modern development of warfare has, however, made organised states terribly powerful. It was impossible to combat the government by violence. In Europe, the main methods of developing sanction and of seizing power were based not on violence but peaceful organisation of workers, peasants and others. That was the only way for India too. Essentially it was noncooperation, although there was difference in details. With organised masses tremendous pressure could be brought on any government which would be compelled to give in. They had an instance of this in Bardoli and the success there showed its efficacy. Such a method, if employed on an all-India scale, was bound to result in national victory.

14. Indian States and British India¹

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that the wording of the resolution was not happy and pointed out that the Nehru Committee report had absolutely nothing to do with the resolution. He held fairly strong and rigid views in regard to all princes. He thought that the days of princes and priests were over throughout the world. The princes were fast disappearing in the different countries of the world and anybody would be a brave man who was prepared to say that this tendency was going to be reversed and that the princes would again appear on the scene. The same process was bound to repeat itself in India also. So far as the Indian princes were concerned, he thought that with a few exceptions they had proved themselves a thoroughly bad lot. The sooner this lot was removed from India, the better it would be for everybody concerned.

Pandit Nehru said that individual nations everywhere wanted to be attached either to a world group or a smaller group and that was why they heard people talking of a World Commonwealth or the British Commonwealth. The tendency was not for nations to remain absolutely independent of one another, but to be interdependent and this was bound to go on until a World Commonwealth came into existence. It was inconceivable that Indian States could remain apart. The relations between them and British India must of necessity be very intimate and they must evolve a common defence force, a common foreign policy, a common fiscal policy and a common economic policy and so forth. They would then find that automatically Indian States would be absorbed into British India. If both Indian India and British India were aiming at responsible government, then the power of Indian princes must be very greatly limited. Either Indian India could be cut off entirely from British India and remain practically an independent nation, or else it must be absorbed, as the resolution put it. They could not conceive of Indian India forming a separate independent nation and the only possible alternative was that Indian States should be absorbed in British India.

1. *The Leader*, 13 October 1928.

Speech in a debate at the Allahabad University Union, on the motion 'that in the interests of democracy and the maintenance of individual rights the Indian States should be absorbed into the future Commonwealth of India.'

15. Presidential Address at the U.P. Provincial Conference¹

For a second time² you have done me the honour of making me President of this Provincial Conference. Grateful as I am, I fully realise that I am here today in place of another³ whom you had wisely chosen and than whom you could have had no better to guide your deliberations here and your activities in the coming year. But to our misfortune, domestic troubles have prevented your chosen President from taking his rightful place in the chair here today and the burden of his work has fallen on me. That burden I shall endeavour to discharge here at this conference but you will surely join with me in the hope that in the course of the year our valiant and great-hearted comrade will take his rightful place as the head of the Congress organisation in this province.

Five years ago you chose me President and I ventured to say to you then that the only possible ideal we could work for was the ideal of complete independence. Our conference adopted this ideal and recommended to the National Congress likewise. It is well to remember this in these days of argument and debate about Independence and Dominion Status. The cry of independence is no new cry in India. From the day our country fell under an alien rule, there have always been people who have dreamed of independence, struggled and worked for it and sacrificed their all for it. What was the great struggle of 1857 but a war of independence consecrated by many gallant deeds and heroic sacrifices and also darkened by misdeeds which brought failure in their train. Here in this city of Jhansi the mind dwells lovingly on that chip of a girl⁴ who knowing no fear, went out to struggle and die against overwhelming odds for the glory of India and her womanhood.

1. Jhansi, 27 October 1928. *The Leader*, 31 October 1928.

2. For the first Presidential Address to the U.P. Provincial Conference at Varanasi in October 1923, see *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 204-213.

3. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. Jawaharlal had not wanted to preside: "It is absurd my presiding over every provincial conference ... I can only repeat myself again and again." He had also wished to have a free hand to participate in the proceedings. But Vidyarthi could not attend because of his father's illness.

4. Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi (1832-1858); was one of the leaders in Bundelkhand and Central India in the revolt of 1857 and died fighting the next year.

As generation has succeeded generation, there has been no lack of men and women who have refused to bow their heads and bend their knees before the alien ruler. For that disobedience they paid a very heavy price, but the gallant stream went on and increased in volume. Memories are short and we are apt to forget the deeds of the past. But even the present generation in which we live has been full enough of golden and inspiring deeds. Were the young men and old, who faced death and long imprisonment thinking of the mirage of Dominion Status or of full-blooded freedom?

No living nation under alien rule can ever be at peace with its conqueror. For peace means submission and submission means the death of all that is vital in the nation. And India has shown her vitality by the endless sacrifices her sons and daughters have made to free her from alien rule. India cannot be at peace with England till she has attained her freedom. That is the psychological, the fundamental reason for our desiring and working for independence. This freedom cannot come by our becoming partners, even if that were possible, of that imperialist concern which is called the British Empire, and we have realised, or ought to realise, that imperialism and freedom are poles apart. The day England sheds her imperialism, we shall gladly cooperate with her. But do you see any signs of it? Or are you simple enough to imagine that we can reform her from within by first entering her Empire or Commonwealth? England today is the arch-priest of imperialism and perhaps the worst offenders are those of her Labour Party who have the remarkable capacity for combining tall talk about freedom and self-determination with full-blooded imperialism.

It is not England that is our enemy. It is imperialism and where imperialism is, there we cannot willingly remain.

But you do not require arguments from me in favour of independence. You have been the leaders in this movement inside the Congress organisation and you may well take pride in the fact that the lead you gave has been followed by the Congress itself.

We have so far laid stress on political independence. It is now time for you to take the lead again and declare what you mean by independence. We are told by some people that the Congress must not concern itself with matters other than political. But life cannot be divided up into compartments, nor indeed can politics itself ignore the other functions of society. The problem before us is to build a free society and to do that you must consider and seek to change social and economic conditions. What manner of independence is it which results in starvation for many and the exploitation of millions? Independence must necessarily involve freedom from all exploitation and to bring

this about you must attack everything in your society which helps the exploiter. That is also a powerful reason why we cannot be satisfied with Dominion Status, for that is bound to result in giving a dominant position to foreign capital and foreign capital means foreign exploitation.

The problem before us is, therefore, twofold, firstly to chalk out an economic and social programme which will provide freedom for the masses and then to indicate the manner of creating sanctions to enforce our programme.

But before we consider the programme let us be clear about our aims and our general outlook. Most of us talk about serving the masses and relieving their poverty, although we seldom have any but the vaguest of notions as to how to do it. We imagine that with the coming of Swaraj, the masses are bound to benefit. This is partly true no doubt, but it is by no means certain that they will do so. Our very method of referring to the masses betrays that we think ourselves something apart from them. By virtue of our intellect or our material possessions we consider ourselves the natural leaders of the masses. It is "we" and the "masses" and if any conflict arises between the two we naturally attach more importance to our own interests. We are convinced that we are the chosen of the land and on our worthy shoulders has fallen the burden of freeing this country and incidentally of bettering our own position.

This is the way we think consciously or unconsciously. It is the way of hypocrisy. Let us not talk of serving the masses when our principal object is to serve our own class. Therefore in drawing up programmes we must keep the interests of the masses uppermost and sacrifice everything else to them. For it is the masses who really are the nation. On their prosperity depends the prosperity of the country. Not only is it just that our programme must keep the interests of the masses uppermost, but it is highly necessary and expedient from other points of view also. Only thus can we raise the sanction which can enforce their will. But to give effect to that programme we shall have to subordinate ourselves and give the predominant place in our movement to the representatives of the masses. Thus only can we make it a real mass movement. Only those who are themselves interested in an economic change can effectively bring it about. The leadership and effective control of the movement must therefore ultimately pass to those who are most exploited today. They will stumble and fall and make many mistakes but they will have the driving force of economic necessity behind them and this is bound to carry them to victory. Bereft of this driving force, our politics are bound to become, as they have indeed become, a jumble of resolutions and processions and shouting with no

action behind them. Swaraj will not be obtained by scoring lawyer's points or by forensic eloquence.

I have repeatedly stated that to my thinking the only solution for our many ills is socialism. Socialism therefore must be our aim. Some of you may perhaps think, not without reason, that we cannot reach it at one bound and it is necessary to have a lesser immediate programme. It is not easy to draw up this programme at a conference and I would earnestly recommend that this conference should appoint a committee to do it. I shall merely indicate here some important matters which should be considered for inclusion in the conference.

Our social programme must lay down clearly that we cannot tolerate the many disabilities which various classes, called the depressed classes, suffer from. We must do away with these distinctions and try to give full opportunities of growth to everyone. Special provision must be made for freeing our womenfolk from the many burdens and disabilities they suffer from, both legally and otherwise. They should have the same status as men, such relics of barbarism as *purdah* must of course go entirely.

Our economic programme must aim at the removal of all economic inequalities and an equitable distribution of wealth. For the moment we may take the provision of a living wage for a worker and protection from the economic consequences of old age, maternity, etc., as provided for in the All Parties Fundamental Rights, as the basis of our programme. How will the provision be made? Surely not by keeping the economic and social structure of today. To give to the poor and depressed, you must take from the rich and those who possess. We have, therefore, to equalise as far as possible the present distinction of wealth and at the same time to see that the principle of taxation is such as to prevent both great wealth and great poverty. That is to say, that the burden of taxation must be increased on the rich and decreased and even removed entirely from the poor.

We in this province have to face especially the zamindar and kisan problem. To our misfortune we have zamindars everywhere and they have prevented all healthy growth. Compare our province to other provinces like the Punjab and Gujarat, where there are peasant holdings. We have indeed in this province produced in the past and have today great men who do honour to the country. But we have hardly a middle class; we specialise in extremes of wealth and poverty. We must therefore face this problem of landlordism, and if we face it, what can we do with it except to abolish it? There is no half-way house. It is a feudal relic of the past utterly out of keeping with modern conditions.

The abolition of landlordism must, therefore, occupy a prominent

place in our programme and instead of that we should have small holdings ordinarily enough for a family to cultivate. But in order to prevent accumulations, we must prohibit all alienations of land and all transfers for debt.

How are we to abolish the big estates? Some advocate confiscation, others full compensation. The latter is on the face of it impossible as we cannot find the enormous amount of money for it. And if we could find the money the burden on the land will continue and the peasant holder will certainly not profit by the change. The only person who will profit will be the zamindar who will be saved all trouble and worry and will get hard cash instead of a varying and troublesome income. Besides, there is no attempt at equalisation of wealth if full compensation is given. The example of other countries shows us that full compensation for land has brought no relief or solution of the problem. In no event therefore can we give full compensation.

Confiscation, on the other hand, though equitably perfectly justifiable, may lead to many cases of hardships. I would suggest therefore that some compensation might be given specially in cases of hardships. But compensation should certainly not be given so as to make the receiver of it a wealthy man again.

I would also suggest that the very poor holders of land, who can merely make a living out of it, should be entirely exempted from taxation.

Another problem that we have to face is the indebtedness of the peasantry. These debts must be subject to partial compensation in cases of hardships.

Taxation should be direct and as far as possible indirect taxation should be abolished. Further, this direct taxation should be steeply graduated so as to fall mainly on the larger incomes.

A tax which we have not got in India, though many other countries including England have got it, is an inheritance tax or death duty. This is an eminently just and social tax and should be introduced in India and steeply graduated so as to prevent large inheritance.

India has become sufficiently industrialised for us to pay special attention to the condition of the workers in the factories. Indeed, the history of the past few months with its strikes and lock-outs and shootings is such that no one can ignore industrial labour. Government does not ignore them. They realise far more than do most of our leaders the potential strength of the workers and so with frantic haste they have sought to muzzle and tie up trade unions. They are not troubled to act in this way with our conferences and the like, for they know well that our chief industry is talk, which, specially that of lawyers, is a harmless commodity. The real danger to government comes from the peasantry

and the workers and the industrial workers being more capable of organised action must inevitably take the lead in mass action. We see, therefore, the attempts of government to crush their organisation and prevent organised action. Wherever there is industrial trouble the whole strength of government is always on the side of the big employer, and in addition to having to put up with starvation wages and miserable housing conditions, the workers have to face bullets of the government soldiers and police. But even this repression was not considered enough and we have had the Trades Disputes Bill and the Public Safety Bill. The British Government has done and will do everything in its power to prevent workers from organising themselves. Are you going to take a neutral attitude in the matter and allow the workers to be crushed? Go to Cawnpore and see the terrible conditions of the workers and the houses they live in. Go to the jute regions of Bengal and compare the millions of profit made by British capitalists with the condition of the miserable workers.

Ordinary humanity must induce you to side with the workers. Political prudence will point the same way, for the workers are the most dynamic factor in our society today and if we ignore them we shall find ourselves ignored and put by on a shelf.

Therefore, we must deliberately help the workers to organise themselves; and by workers I do not merely refer to those who do manual labour but all who work by their muscles or their brains. First of all, we have to combat the measures of government which hamper the growth of the workers. We must help trade unions and try to develop factory committees to safeguard the rights of the workers. Our immediate programme must be the enforcement of the 8-hour day and the 44-hour week and the fullest provisions for compensation, insurance and the like. For women and children special provisions must be made, regarding hours of work, the kind of work which is suitable for them and maternity provisions. Healthy and sanitary housing accommodation must be provided by the employers for every employee and a minimum living wage must be fixed. These suggestions are not revolutionary. Even from the capitalist point of view they are recognised to be essential in order to increase the efficiency of labour.

These are only some odd suggestions for you to consider. Many others will suggest themselves to you. My present object is to impress you that we can no longer make any progress by the cry of Swaraj only. We must make it clear that we aim at economic and social Swaraj as well as political and for this purpose we must lay down a definite economic and social programme. Only thus can you bring your movement for freedom in touch with reality and make it a dynamic and irresistible

force. This is also the surest way of killing communalism.

Communalism cannot go by pious resolutions or endless talks of unity. If you will examine it, you will find that in essence it is the desire amongst intellectuals for the loaves and fishes of office. It has nothing to do with the masses but the masses are deluded and misled and made to forget their real troubles. If you direct their attention to economic facts which matter, you will automatically turn them away from communalism and pseudo-religious mentality.

We have the curious fact today that some of our prominent politicians talk fondly of independence and yet claim all manner of communal rights and privileges. We are told repeatedly that the heart of the community is sound. I have no doubt that the heart of every community is sound, but this strange mixture of communalism and independence makes me doubt if the heads of those who combine the two are sound. For there is nothing in common between these two and you cannot build up the noble edifice of a free India on the shifting and sandy foundations of communalism. The All Parties Conference has made a number of suggestions on the communal issue. These do not put an end to all communalism but they go a very long way in that direction and should, therefore, be cordially welcomed. Under the circumstances I believe they are the best solution of this problem and I trust this conference will fully endorse them and work for them.

Having defined our ideal, how are we going to achieve it? Every one says that we must have sanctions, but I have noticed a tendency in some of us to believe that if we shout together and shout long enough and do nothing else we shall succeed. Apparently they believe that the British dominion in India will suddenly give way like the walls of Jericho, if the noise we make is loud enough. That is I think the basis of the cry for Dominion Status and that is another reason why I consider Dominion Status as an ideal to lead away from the right path. It makes us think that sanctions are not necessary and that is a dangerous thought. Even a child in politics knows that without strength behind a demand that demand is worthless.

We have, therefore, to devise sanctions. I have already hinted these sanctions can only come from mass organisation and mass action. The nature of that action must be determined at the particular moment but in principle it must be some kind of noncooperation. We may not perhaps adopt all the items of the noncooperation programme of 1921 but we must adopt the spirit of it leading to non-payment of taxes or other forms of mass civil disobedience.

It may be that we may be called upon to help England with our men and treasure in an imperialist war. The Congress has already given us

a lead for this and we must watch with vigilance that we are not exploited again as we were in 1914.

India is not so weak as many people imagine. Our weakness is merely due to our own faint hearts and specially our fear of the masses. If we once get into touch with the masses and work with them, and for them, our strength will become enormous. World forces help us and even India, weak as she is, can make a difference in a crisis.

I have not referred so far to the Simon Commission, for so far as that is concerned I would be speaking to the converted. You will of course have nothing to do with it. That is only an example of the mentality of England and shows us how she wants to treat us. She will have no cooperation with us and she is only there to enforce her will. Why then should we waste our energy in evolving schemes of co-operation with her? Let us develop strength and ultimately the strong will prevail.

The report of the Nehru Committee and the decisions of the All Parties Conference have been discussed threadbare and only a few days ago I had occasion at another provincial conference to deal with them at length. I have already referred to some parts of it, notably the communal recommendations. For the rest, although I disagree with some recommendations, I am prepared to commend it generally subject to the qualification of independence. I recognise fully the value of the report and do not wish by petty criticism to lessen it.

One thing more I refer to and that is the question of the Indian States. We have had recently a very illuminatory address by the Maharaja of Bikaner.⁶ Among various revealing statements he has made, perhaps the most revealing is his clear declaration that in case of a future war between India and England, he will whole-heartedly support England against his own country. I do not think you will require any comment from me on this amazing declaration. If the Maharaja had lived in England or France or Germany or the United States or indeed any other country and had made such a declaration, what kind of reception do you think it would have had? The Maharaja is perhaps living mentally in the middle ages and still thinks of the divine right of kings and imagines like the French king of old, *L'état c'est moi*. But the king who said this is long departed and a republic exists in his country, and in England the king is but a figurehead without the least power. It would be well for our princes and chieftains to remember that the days of kings and princes are past. This leads us to another conclusion. In drawing up programmes of work we must see what classes and groups

6. Ganga Singh (1880-1943); became ruler in 1887 and secured ruling powers in 1898; Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, 1921-26.

in the country stand to gain special privileges by the freedom of India and what stand to lose them. Let us be quite clear in our minds about this and having made this distinction let us draw up a programme for the former group. The latter can never be a help to us and in a moment of crisis may turn against us and do us great injury. Any attempt to satisfy them and include them in our programme is imprudent not only on equitable grounds but also from the point of view of expediency.

17. Address at the Champaran District Political Conference¹

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that in the existing world conditions India could no longer remain an isolated national unit shut within her own boundary, unaffected by the currents of thought in the modern world. Improvements in the methods of communication had considerably eliminated the barriers of time and space and events occurring in one part of the world were bound to influence life and thought in even the remotest corner and therefore there was no escape for India from the onrush of modern thoughts and ideas. It was therefore but right and proper that India should commence to study the newest thoughts and ideas that were revolutionising life in the western countries and thus equip herself for occupying her rightful place in the modern world.

Although the European countries were not fighting like India for political freedom, a fight equally tenacious and desperate was being ruthlessly carried on in those countries for the attainment of economic emancipation, for putting an end to all exploitation by the landlords of the peasants and by capital of labour. Russia had nearly attained her goal. There the organised peasant and labour forces had succeeded in uprooting Tsarism and feudalism, substituting for them a government by the real people. There the principle of 'no work no food' was firmly established, and labour was raised to its rightful position of dignity and sanctity and all parasitical elements in society who had hitherto been exploiting labour and the peasantry were being removed. A man who did not work had no right to the privileges of society. A society was an organic whole, each member of which was required to contribute his own quota to its development and it would be weaker in the proportion in which there were members in it contributing little or nothing towards the production

1. Bettiah, 15 November 1928. *The Searchlight*, 21 November 1928. The speech was delivered in Hindi.

of national wealth. In India the tendency was to ignore this basic principle of the entire system of social law and that was the root cause of the appalling poverty of the vast mass of her population. The number of social parasites was very large in India and the mistaken notion had gained ground that the more idle the person, the greater was the honour and reverence due to him. However good and benevolent a zamindar might temperamentally be from the economic standpoint, he was producing nothing and contributing nothing towards national wealth. This was also the case of the money-lenders, and yet these two classes of people, whose number was by no means inconsiderable, were held in universal esteem throughout India. Besides these two classes, there were other parasites such as *sadhus* and *fakirs* whose number, according to the Census Report, was over 55 lakhs. These people who were living on the labour of others were a regular burden on society, and a perpetual drainage on the national wealth. Over and above this, the cultivators of India had to remain without any productive employment for about 3 or 4 months a year and live on the labour of the remaining nine months. No wonder that with such a heavy burden of the unemployed on her shoulder, the economic backbone of the country had reached almost the point of breaking.

The tragedy of the situation lay in the fact that the people, who themselves were the sufferers, accepted this state of things as a matter of course and even tried to defend the existing inequalities on religious grounds. It was the *Kaliyuga*, they would say, and in this age the state of society could not be otherwise. But there were other countries in the world also and there was no reason why *Kaliyuga* should particularly descend upon India and not on many other countries in the world. The whole conception was based on superstition and the speaker appealed to the people to shake it off and face facts squarely in the face with a view to finding out the true remedy.

What was the remedy? According to the speaker, the true remedy lay in socialism. If India wanted true Swaraj which should be synonymous with simultaneous political and economic emancipation for the masses they must try to establish in India a form of government based on a socialistic conception of the State. All avenues of production, land, factories and channels of distribution must be rescued from the hands of a few individuals or groups and transferred to the possession and control of the nation. This alone was capable of putting a stop to centralisation of wealth, monopoly of production and distribution without which the economic emancipation of the people would for ever remain a dream. Merit must as a matter of course be

rewarded but provision must be made for equal opportunity for all. Theoretical equal opportunity in the existing state of grinding poverty of the mass of the population was nothing better than myth and delusion. The present system could only produce a David Yule² on the one hand and the diseased, emaciated, ignorant and starving labourer on the other who in the event of joining a strike out of exasperation would rush headlong to be shot down by the police, while the man who exploited the labours of him and his colleague would die a peaceful death, leaving an inheritance of crores of rupees for his successors. Nothing short of a socialistic state could ensure genuine equal opportunity for all and so long as that was not provided for, the talk of merit getting its proper reward was mere eyewash.

The existence of the present system of disproportionately unequal distribution of wealth gave rise to imperialism which in its turn created the blind race for power among different nations leading ultimately to devastating warfare. And who would pay for this war? Not the capitalists who would bring it about but the same poor people bled white by the exploiting capitalistic agencies. A great world war was likely to come again and this would be more extensive in its magnitude and more devastating in consequences than even the last great war. Considerable progress had been made in the art of destruction and the poor would again be called upon to give their blood. How could this and its repetition be stopped? The only royal road was establishment of socialism all over the world.

Dealing with the question of Swaraj the speaker said that repetition of the word Swaraj over and over again would not bring them any the nearer to it. They must visualise the form of Swaraj they wanted. Monarchy was a discredited system and they could not establish a monarchical state in India. Personally he wanted a constitution which would be based on the socialistic model. But whatever might be its form, it is the people who should have to fight for its attainment. Ostensibly, it might appear to the peasants and the labourers that it was the educated people who wanted and would derive benefit from Swaraj and that they who were concerned only with their zamindars or proprietors did not need it and had nothing to expect from it. This also was a mistaken notion. In fact, persons like him who were not standing in immediate need of food, who might, if they liked, get any lucrative government service, were the persons who did not stand in urgent need of Swaraj. The peasants and the labourers, living perpetually on the verge of starvation were just the

2. Sir David Yule (1858-1928); director of Andrew Yule and Company Ltd., a well-known British firm in Calcutta.

persons who needed it most and having no immediate concern with government patronage, were the fittest persons to plunge into the battle for freedom. In Russia, freedom was won by the ordinary people, and if India also wanted Swaraj it would be for her peasants and labourers to fight for it.

THE CALCUTTA CONGRESS

1. To Shankarlal Banker¹

Allahabad
13 July 1928

My dear Shankarlal,

I have your letter of 9th inst. I have gone through the enclosures and I am sorry to find that there is some trouble² about the *khadi* exhibition to be held in Calcutta this year.

There is no doubt that there is considerable difference in outlook between you and the Calcutta people in charge of the exhibition.

Probably the way I would look at this matter will not be quite the same as that of other members³ of the Council. I am not opposed to machinery though I do not see the necessity for displaying it in this exhibition. But I am strongly opposed to Indian mill cloth being exhibited.

Could it not be possible for you to have an entirely separate *khadi* exhibition? The Reception Committee might be induced to give you some land and some money and leave you a free hand. I should have thought that this was the best way out. The Bengal people will certainly not convert you to their way of thinking and I doubt that you will convert them for the present at least. It may be possible to bring pressure to bear on them to modify their original programme. But this would only result in friction and dissatisfaction and the local people will become disgruntled and will not help at all. It is better for us to have a free hand and to leave them free to do what they want to.

I am sorry it is a little difficult for me to go to Sabarmati about the 20th of this month. I am going tomorrow to Lucknow and from there I shall proceed to Mussoorie to see my wife. If I go to Ahmedabad I shall have to give up the visit to Mussoorie. Much as I would like

1. Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 13635.

2. The Calcutta Congress exhibition committee, headed by Bidhan Roy and Subhas Bose, had planned to exhibit a variety of items including machinery and Indian textiles. They had also invited all local governments to participate in the exhibition. Mahatma Gandhi had disliked any display of Indian textiles and ultimately this was abandoned.

3. The other members included Mahatma Gandhi, Jamnalal Bajaj, C. Rajagopalachari, Vallabhbhai Patel and Rajendra Prasad.

to meet you I am not sure that this particular matter of the exhibition is important enough to make me change my programme. Important it is but you and other members of the Council hardly require my assistance to deal with it. You will therefore I hope excuse me.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. On Independence¹

Jawaharlal Nehru moved the following amendment to Mahatma Gandhi's resolution²:

"This Congress adheres to the decision of the Madras Congress declaring complete independence to be the goal of the Indian people and is of opinion that there can be no true freedom till British connection is severed.

This Congress accepts the recommendations of the Nehru Committee as agreed to by the Lucknow All Parties Conference for settlement of communal differences.

This Congress cordially congratulates the Nehru Committee for their labours, patriotism and farsightedness and without prejudice to the resolution of the Congress relating to complete independence, is of opinion that the recommendations of the Nehru Committee are a great step towards political advance and without committing itself to every detail generally approves of them."

It is unbecoming for the Secretary of the Working Committee to challenge a resolution recommended by the Working Committee and certainly it might be considered presumptuous on my part to get up and challenge the resolution moved by Mahatmaji. Notwithstanding, I have felt it incumbent to do so because of the very teaching I have learnt at his feet, because of the lesson he taught me when I had the

1. Discussion at the Subjects Committee meeting of the Congress at Calcutta on 27 December 1928, reported in *The Searchlight*, 30 December 1928.
2. Mahatma Gandhi's resolution welcomed the Nehru Report and, while adhering to the resolution on independence passed at the Madras Congress, called on the British Parliament to accept the Report before 31 December 1929. If this were not done, the Congress would organise nonviolent noncooperation.

high privilege to serve under his banner. At the conclusion of his address he advised us not to vote for the resolution because of the personality involved.

This resolution is identical to the one moved and passed at Delhi³, and although for myself I would have liked to keep the phrase 'British imperialism', I have agreed to delete that with a view to make it identical with the Delhi resolution. It might be further said that the Delhi resolution was a self-contradictory one; there was not so much of mental honesty as there should be about a resolution in this session. The charge is partly justified as all compromise resolutions are like that. We can get rid of that by taking a definite line with the resolution of others; but our political life being what it is, we have very often to tone down our demands and pass the resolution which some of us might not like in its entirety as we want a certain unanimity of opinion to prevail.

I know very well that the Delhi resolution represented a compromise so far as some of us are concerned, giving up many things that we do not like to give up, but we felt it was not right for us to force the issue and have our viewpoints completely adopted by the Congress and thereby spoil the agreement and bring about either a split or a great deal of friction between ourselves. It is because of this that some of us earnestly desired that we should not take up any such position, that we should take up the very minimum. It is from that viewpoint that this resolution was put forward at Delhi and passed with practical unanimity; only one or two persons voted against it.

It seems to be a very unfortunate commentary on the evolution of our public life for the last three months that the resolution passed at Delhi with unanimity should come in the shape of an amendment — an amendment which is not accepted by the mover, nor accepted by the Working Committee which recommended the resolution to the Delhi A.I.C.C. I come before you with this resolution not because it is perfectly self-consistent but because it does offer a fair and just basis for compromise between the two rival schools of thought who represent two entirely different mentalities.

I can assure the House that nothing shall be done on our part which will hinder our working together. We are prepared to give up much.

3. The All Parties Conference Report was taken up by the A.I.C.C. at its meeting in Delhi on 4-5 November 1928. It reiterated the goal of complete independence, endorsed the communal solution of the Nehru Committee, and was of opinion that the proposals of the Nehru Committee were a great step towards political advance and generally approved them, without committing itself to every detail.

We are prepared to subordinate our ideas to some extent, but there are one or two things on which we find it impossible to give up whatever the consequences may be. I have understood that in the programme of action as to what is to be done and what is not to be done there should be a compromise and we have to fit ourselves in with other people's reasoning and desire; but I have not heard of compromise about ideals, of giving up an ideal to suit another's fancy. I do submit, whether it be for two years or one year or for a day, giving up of the ideal is a serious thing, which represents that you are pulling down your flag and that is a very serious thing. You are welcome to do it if you want it but you must realise fully the national and international consequences of that and having realised that, if you are prepared to pull down the flag of independence then do so by all means; but then you must give us the liberty to hold on to that flag even though we may be in a minority in the country. This is a vital issue and we feel with regard to it that there can be no compromise. It is a matter with us of the deepest conviction, it is a matter with us of what we think is the honour of the country and I submit it should be a matter with this House and the Congress of the most vital consequence involving the honour of the country.

To say that we cannot accept the report of the Nehru Committee in part is not wholly correct. So far as action is concerned, we are prepared, now as in the past, to cooperate in a large measure in giving publicity to the recommendations of the Nehru Report. We have put no impediment in that way; on the contrary, we have helped. But it is one thing to help it and another thing to give up what we cherish most. Without precipitating friction we must remember that the issue will arise as it arose in Ireland, whether you should accept Dominion Status or not.

I am not aware of any such country which under similar circumstances had adopted deliberately and consciously the dominion ideal of government. I do not see why we should say we want the Dominion type of government—mind you, it is not offered to us, there is no mention of this on the other side; but by their acts and deeds you can see the insult offered to you when a Commission goes about your country adding insult to injury. Do you think that it is right to haul down the Swaraj flag and to go on talking of Dominion Status? Personally I think, from whatever point of view you look at it, either from the standpoint of national honour or from the point of view of experience, if you accept Dominion Status it would be an extremely wrong and foolish act. You know incidents that have happened in the country which have made you feel that it is impossible to carry on. You know the

death of Lala Lajpat Rai, you know what has happened at Lahore and Lucknow, and you know what insulting threat⁴ the Viceroy has issued. After that are you going to say that you have changed your opinion whatever the Viceroy and the like may say? If there was ever any necessity for not pulling down the flag, it should not be drawn down at the present moment when the threats are in the air. After what has happened, what is happening, I think it would be a fatal error if you break the spirit of national resistance, if you turn down the flag of independence. After all it is the programme of action that matters. Words do not carry us very far but certain ideology makes a great deal of difference.

I submit to you honestly that if I have energy to serve the country that energy oozes out of me at the very thought of Dominion Status. I cannot go about spending my energy and strength for Dominion Status. I do submit to you that there are many like me in this country who feel like that. You will find in all India groups of organisations that are springing up full of energy and militant spirit and they promise to attain an early freedom for India. The question is, are you going to help the development of the militant spirit in the country? Are you going to help the development of this revolutionary spirit in the country or are you going to damp it and kill it in trying to bring about a compromise? Certainly it damps my spirit if you talk of Dominion Status and I can only judge others by my standard. The real thing in the world is not so much the question of struggle between India and England, the real conflict is between the two sets of ideals; and the question is, which set of ideals are you going to keep before the country? This is a conflict between imperialism and all that is not imperialism and if you look at it from that point of view, you cannot for one moment think of Dominion Status so long as Great Britain has the empire around her. That is the question before you. Just consider what you mean. By accepting Dominion Status you show to the world that you are prepared to accept the psychology of imperialism and this is a very dangerous thing. For then you talk in terms of the British Empire as it is. For you do not talk about it in terms of the British Com-

4. The Viceroy, Lord Irwin, speaking at the European Association dinner in Calcutta on 17 December 1928, referring to the boycott of Simon Commission had said: "I am sure that all sober-minded citizens of India must have witnessed with regret and will condemn the continued attempts to conduct unmannerly and offensive demonstrations against the Commission and their Indian colleagues. . . . In such circumstances it is the plain duty of government to take whatever steps it deems necessary to prevent the recurrence of these discreditable incidents."

monwealth which is likely to be later on after two or three years. Do you expect the British Empire to suddenly become devoid of imperialism? I say that is not going to happen by accepting Dominion Status, but you say that you are prepared to help their psychology of imperialism.

Remember, what effect it will have on the other empires. The world is divided today between imperialistic and non imperialistic groups; people do not understand the subtle line of logic about which we have heard so much, telling us that Dominion Status is really independence. People only want to know which group you belong to, whether you belong to the imperialistic group or to the large number of exploited and suffering nations. Today you have received messages of sympathy from Java, Sumatra and other down-trodden countries wishing you success because they feel that you are one of them and because they feel that by declaring for independence you have joined in their struggle against imperialism all over the world. If you pull down the flag of independence and talk of Dominion Status immediately you go back, mentally at any rate, to the fold of that very imperialism and you give up the cause of suffering nations who look forward to you for the success in their movement, not because you are going to Java to help them but because it is well-known in world history for the last hundred years that the greatest obstacle to freedom is the British Empire and the British possession of India. That is the fact which has governed world history for a century and that is the fact which everybody realises today. Therefore to the extent you get rid of this imperialism, to that extent you help these down-trodden countries; and if to gain some internal freedom you adopt the psychology of imperialism and of Dominion Status, you may gain a little certainly but you break the links with these people who are looking to you and are prepared to join with you in the struggle.

I therefore submit to this House that prepared as this House should be for any compromise on any lines it should not be prepared to give up this definite and clear idea of independence for any length of time.

3. On the Establishment of Congress Agencies Abroad¹

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that he sympathized completely with Mr. Satyamurti in his desire to establish relations with other countries. He had been thinking over this matter for some time past not merely vaguely but with a view to work out a scheme for that purpose, but he felt that it was extraordinarily difficult at the present moment for them to open up regular agencies of this kind. It seemed to him that the opening up of the various branches of the Congress was an easier way of doing things, without having to spend much money over it or doing anything special or spectacular. He thought that in the course of a year these subordinate branches and affiliated committees will spring up wherever Indians are present in considerable numbers in any part of the world so that automatically they would have some kind of agencies to represent their interests. It was quite possible, and personally he would very much have liked to establish two or three centres where they could have definite first class agents. The Working Committee could possibly do that. They could establish an agent, if possible, in Paris, America, Constantinople, Moscow and Tokyo. He had the strongest objection to an agent being kept in London. So far as Nanking and Moscow were concerned, he doubted very much whether they could possibly in the present circumstances send representatives there but Mr. Satyamurti possibly thought of utilising Indians there. He asked if it were not possible for them to form some kind of a committee which could be affiliated to the All India Congress Committee. Of course, there was difficulty in corresponding with these countries. If the Working Committee want to work it out they could do it by forming a foreign department. He hoped that it would be possible for them to send a representative in July next to Paris, where an opportunity would be presented to them to come into contact with labour organisations all over the world. Even if this meant spending some money for that purpose, it would

1. From a report in *The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 31 December 1928. Speech delivered in the Subjects Committee meeting at the Calcutta Congress on S. Satyamurti's resolution that agencies be established abroad on behalf of the Indian National Congress for promoting trade, cultural and political relations between India and foreign countries. Satyamurti later withdrew the resolution.

be a better way of keeping in touch with foreign countries than by embarking on an extensive programme.

4. On Subhas Bose's Amendment of Mahatma Gandhi's Resolution¹

President, sisters and brothers,

The resolution² of Mahatma Gandhi is before you and what it says must be clear to you. Several amendments have been moved to that. One³ of them is by Subhas babu. You must have understood that also and compared it with Mahatma Gandhi's resolution. Several people have already spoken on both sides. To oppose Mahatmaji's proposal is not easy. We are passing through a critical period. Let us consider Mahatmaji's resolution completely. The fact is that he is one of our foremost rebels. I would even say that if at any time India had to rise in revolt Mahatma Gandhi would be the first person to lead it.

The question before you is very plain — do you prefer Dominion Status or complete independence? For which are you prepared to fight? I pose a very simple question to our senior leaders. Is there any country in the world where this type of Dominion Status is prevalent? It exists nowhere except in the British Empire. Why then do we hanker after some thing which sounds so strange to us? We all know what independence means. But do we know the implications of Dominion Status? It is meant for those who originally belonged to Britain but established colonies elsewhere. The situation in our country is quite

1. Report of the Proceedings of the Indian National Congress, Calcutta, 1928. Original in Hindi.
2. This stated that, while adhering to the resolution relating to complete independence as passed at Madras Congress, the Congress approved of the constitution drawn up by the All Parties Committee; but in the event of its non-acceptance by the British Parliament on or before 31 December 1929, the Congress would organise nonviolent noncooperation.
3. Subhas Bose's amendment was that the Congress did not accept Dominion Status as the basis of the recommended constitution but was of the opinion that the other recommendations contained in the Nehru Committee Report constituted a step towards political advancement and without committing itself to every detail generally approved of them.

different. India can never become their colony. Has any nation ever sacrificed her sons for such a sort of state? Dominion Status can never be liked by any Indian.

You know that the flag of independence was for the first time unfurled at the Madras Congress and there it was resolved that complete independence is our goal. Since then the Nehru Committee has been in session and it has prepared this Nehru Report. We appreciate this report for it has made many points that will benefit our country. But we cannot accept it as our ideal or aim. Having accepted independence as our goal a year earlier, if we now accept this report as our ideal — you can well imagine where we are going!

Our struggle for independence does not concern India alone. This is an international issue. You have received so many messages from abroad; and all of them have emphasised that we should not let our demand of independence be superseded by anything else. None of them has recommended Dominion Status.

The British are not going to concede our demand howsoever low we may pitch it. I do not want you to be emotional. You should seriously consider this problem. Emotions do not solve problems. We have to see how best we can succeed in our mission. If you wish that India be free and our country rid of this slavery as soon as possible, then our goal can only be independence. My personal opinion is that India's aim should be complete independence and she should strive for that. So I support Subhas babu's amendment.

5. On the Calcutta Congress¹

I am sorry I have no special statement to make. The Congress session did many things of which everybody can approve and some things which some people cannot like. But undoubtedly it was a remarkable session — the very conflicts that arose showed a clash of ideas which means that the Congress is in touch with the realities of the situation. So long as it retains this vital touch it remains a vital body. The Congress and the Working Committee have pointed the way for work to every one according to his liking. Let us, therefore, concentrate on this work and give up arguments and debates for a while.

1. Calcutta, 10 January 1929. *The Searchlight*, 13 January 1929.

THE INDEPENDENCE FOR
INDIA LEAGUE 1929

1. To Members of the All India Council of the League¹

Allahabad
January 31st, 1929

Dear friend,

You will remember that at the meeting of the League held in Delhi early in November a constitution was drafted and two sub-committees were appointed. One of these was to draw up a programme for the League. The other was to draw up a list of communal organisations which came under the ban. It was hoped to have meetings of the Council in Calcutta to consider these matters as well as to lay down definite lines for future work. It was also proposed to hold a conference of the League in Calcutta.

You know what happened in Calcutta. Two or three meetings of the Council were held in the early days but they spent all their time in considering what should be done in the Convention and in the Subjects Committee. Later many hurriedly convened meetings of odd members of the League, who could be reached, were held again to consider the proceedings in the Subjects Committee and in the open Congress. We never had time to sit down and think of our programme and future work. We have come away from Calcutta with no definite directions on the subject and I find it difficult to answer enquiries about it.

Even before the Calcutta Congress I found it difficult to get members of the League to take very much interest in the tasks that had been entrusted to them. For instance, the committee to make a list of communal organisations would not do any work in spite of many reminders. Indeed I seldom had a reply from its members. The programme committee was almost equally oblivious of its duty. Ultimately finding no response whatever I circulated a draft programme myself. To this also there was practically no response. Only Dr. B. N. Datta sent me a draft of his own and Shiva Prasad Gupta also wrote briefly on the subject. The other members of the committee, which included all the office-bearers, sent no word of any kind.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 7/1928-29, pp. 77-79 N.M.M.L.

It is obvious that no organization, much less a new organization, can carry on work if it has to contend with inertia even in its inner circle of members. I seek your guidance therefore as to what should be done.

It is obviously difficult for the Central Council to meet in the near future. Something can be done by correspondence but this is an unsatisfactory method. One thing that can be done is for provincial committees to meet and draw up their own definite programmes within the lines and principles laid down by the League. There is however one danger in this, that two committees may work on more or less different lines. Another alternative is that the draft programme which I have circulated might be considered as a basis for suggestions by the provincial committees and the members of the Central Council.

We were informed last year of large numbers of members having been enrolled in some provinces. But no membership dues have been sent to our Treasurer. Indeed the expenditure that we have had to face in the central office has largely fallen on individuals here as money was not forthcoming from the provinces.

Our League cannot continue in a state of coma. It must be either a live body or cease to exist. The League came into existence primarily for the ideal of independence but it was clearly felt at the time and repeatedly stated that mere political independence is not enough. In our objectives therefore we deliberately included the reconstruction of Indian society on the basis of social and economic equality. If we are to justify this object we must carry on work in accordance with it.

For this work as well as for other work funds are necessary. The League has already recommended that each member should contribute a percentage of his income. I do not know if any member has done so but no part of it has so far reached our office.

This letter is not likely to prove helpful but the state of our League at present is itself a little chaotic. So this letter is also bound to suffer from want of clarity. I am addressing it to you for your general advice in regard to the future of the League and what action this office should take. On receipt of your reply I shall endeavour to take some definite action.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. To A. A. Shaikh¹

February 13th, 1929

Dear Shaikh,

... There can be no objection to your starting a branch of the Independence for India League in Berlin. The League unfortunately is not very firmly established in India yet. This is not because the idea of independence lacks support but for various other reasons. The resolution passed by the National Congress this year makes it certain that practically the whole of nationalist India will stand for independence by the end of this year.

You can also start a branch of the National Congress in Berlin. This has been done in London and in New York as also in Kobe in Japan. I think it is desirable to have as many such overseas branches as possible. If you wish to start such a branch it is for you to form one provisionally and ask for affiliation. You will probably have to pay an affiliation fee which will not be a very big sum.

Regarding funds I do not think the Congress is likely to send you any money. As you must know they have sanctioned £ 30 monthly already for an Indian Students Advisory Bureau in Berlin. This is a very unusual departure for the Congress and they are not likely to make any further grants for the time being...

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F. D. 20/1929 (Pt. I), p. 11, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

3. To N. V. Gangadhar¹

Allahabad
February 14th, 1929

Dear Dr. Gangadhar,²

I have your letter of the 29th January together with stamp for Re. 1/-. I enclose a form for membership of the League which please fill in and return to me.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 16/1929, p. 99, N.M.M.L.

2. Dr. Nadgir Vishwanath Gangadhar, a resident of Hirekerur, Dharwar district.

It is not quite correct to say that I have slackened in my efforts for the Independence for India League. I have many things to attend to and therefore I cannot devote myself wholly to the Independence League.

As you know the Congress is committed to Independence if Dominion Status is not granted this year. There is no chance of Dominion Status being granted this year. So there will only be one party, that of Independence, left in the country. Nonetheless we should strengthen the Independence for India League.

The constitution of the League is being sent to you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To K. L. Ganguly¹

March 5th, 1929

My dear Ganguly,

I am glad to hear from you again. I am very sorry about the membership certificates. The Treasurer Shiva Prasad Gupta handed me a bundle in Calcutta and I quite forgot to issue them. I think your lot is in this bundle. I am having the matter seen to.

Owing to various difficulties and other preoccupations the Council of the Independence League did not draw up any programme in Calcutta. I have circularised them but this is an unsatisfactory course. The only thing to do is to have a meeting and it is no easy matter to have an all-India meeting. Meanwhile I am suggesting to all provincial branches to inform me what they propose to do. So far as our province is concerned we are concentrating and issuing leaflets² specially dealing with socialistic ideas.

It is obvious that we have a big struggle ahead. I do not know if it is desirable for the Independence League to work on an entirely separate programme in this struggle. When the struggle comes it takes

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G.8/1929 (Pt. II), pp. 187-189, N.M.M.L.

2. The Kisan and Swaraj, Misfortunes of the Kisans, Unemployment in India, and Poverty of India and its Cure. See *post* Section 14.

place on one or two particular issues and we can well cooperate with others on these issues. Meanwhile we can carry on our work specially amongst the workers and peasants. The Congress resolution in Calcutta was not from our point of view a very satisfactory one. But it has one great advantage. At the end of this year the Congress and Mr. Gandhi are committed to independence as indeed Mr. Gandhi has stated. There is not the least chance of our getting any kind of Dominion Government this year. So next year there will practically be one party, the party of independence.

I am glad you are interesting yourself in a volunteer corps. In this connection I do not see why you should not cooperate with the Hindu-stani Seva Dal. Subhas Bose is President for this year. But he is taking no interest in the matter and he is keeping the Bengal volunteers aloof from it. I do not at all like this provincial separatism. I am sending you a copy of the constitution and rules of the Dal. Any further information on the subject you can obtain from the Secretary, Dr. Hardikar, Hubli, (Karnatak).

I may go to Calcutta about the 20th of this month.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. To B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya¹

Allahabad
March 19th, 1929

My dear Dr. Pattabhi,²

I am glad to find that you have been elected President of the Andhra branch of the Independence for India League. The League is in a very curious position. I sent a circular letter about this to the members of the Council and to certain others. I do not know if you got it. I

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 7/1928-29, p. 3, N.M.M.L.

2. (1880-1959); physician at Machilipatnam in Andhra; member A.I.C.C. 1916-52; member Working Committee 1929-31, 1934-36, 1938-46, 1948; official candidate for the Congress presidency but defeated by Subhas Bose 1939; President All India States Peoples' Conference at Karachi, 1936 and Navasari Convention 1938-39 and Working President 1946-48; President of the Congress 1948; Governor of Madhya Pradesh 1952-57.

propose to have a meeting of the Council when the All India Committee meets in Allahabad probably on the 13th May. In the U.P. all we are doing on behalf of our branch of the Independence League is:

(1) to keep the organization going quietly enrolling members without making any special effort in that behalf;

(2) trying to fix upon a social and economic programme;

(3) issuing small leaflets mostly on social and economic matters. This does not in any way conflict with the Congress programme. Of course all of us as Congressmen are working to the best of our ability for the Congress programme.

It passes my comprehension how anyone who believes in independence can talk of accepting office in the provincial councils. I have heard vague rumours to the effect that some people in Madras have been talking in this way. But I do not know anything definite. It is clear that our League must put this kind of thing down.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. To Members of the Central Council and Provincial Organisers and Secretaries of the League¹

Allahabad
April 10th, 1929

Dear Friend,

The Independence for India League has been in a state of suspended animation for some time past. In some provinces a little work has been done. In others not even this has been done. Partly this is due to the fact that members of the League have been busy helping in Congress reorganisation. Inquiries come from people as to what the League is doing and what it intends to do. It seems to me that it is very necessary for us to clarify the position of the League both in regard to its programme and its present activities. For this purpose a meeting of the Central Council should be held. As the All India Congress Committee meeting is being held on the 24th of May our Central Council might meet a day earlier on the 23rd.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 7/1928-1929, p. 53, N.M.M.L.

The U.P. branch of the League has adopted a certain programme and has recommended this to the All India Council for adoption. I am sending you a copy of this programme for you to consider it and be ready with your suggestions for the next meeting. I shall inform you of the exact time and place of the meeting after consulting the president.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

PROGRAMME OF THE LEAGUE U.P. BRANCH

The U.P. branch of the Independence for India League met at Farrukhabad on March 31st and April 1st to consider the programme of the League. The following tentative programme was adopted and has been recommended to the All India Council of the League:-

The object of the League is to achieve independence for India and to reconstruct Indian society on a basis of social and economic equality. This necessarily implies that the League is out to remove all political, social and economic barriers between various groups or between man and man and man and woman. It means that the League aims at the socialistic democratic state in which every person has the fullest opportunities of development and the state control of the means of production and distribution.

The League must therefore seek to change the present capitalist and feudal basis of society. These changes can only be brought about by developing sanctions to enforce demands and sanctions can be developed only by organisation of those groups and classes which suffer and are exploited most under the existing system. The vast majority of the people fall in those groups. The few that remain are mostly those who are themselves exploiters and whose interest it is to have the present system continue. There are also those groups between these two who cannot be definitely said to belong to either. Among them are many who perform useful functions in society and who can become useful members of our future socialist state.

We must therefore seek to organise all such groups and classes which are necessary for the well-being of the society, such as peasants, workers on land, industrial workers, shopkeepers, members of some professions, artisans and craftsmen and unemployed intellectuals. We can have nothing in common with those classes which are by their very nature parasitical on society. There can be no room for these parasites in the future state. While the organisation of all progressive and vital groups

is necessary and should be encouraged, special stress must be laid on peasantry and industrial workers who form the bulk of the population and on whom the burden of exploitation has fallen most heavily. The League will, therefore, help in every way the formation of trade unions and peasants' unions.

The immediate programme is:-

GENERAL:-

- (1) Direct taxation as far as possible on a steeply graduated scale. The principles of income tax should be applied to income from land.
- (2) Inheritance taxes or death duties also steeply graduated.
- (3) Universal, free and compulsory primary education.
- (4) Adult suffrage.
- (5) Minimum living wage for all workers.
- (6) Religion or caste or sect to give no political or economic status.
- (7) Excess profit tax.
- (8) Panchayats and arbitration boards.
- (9) Organisation of people into occupational groups.

INDUSTRIAL:-

- (1) State should gradually acquire control of key industries.
- (2) Formation of trade unions.
- (3) Formation of factory committees of workers.
- (4) Eight-hour day and forty-four hour week.
- (5) Special provision for women workers and young (a) not to be employed in heavy or dangerous trades, (b) maternity provisions, (c) creches.
- (6) Right to strike.
- (7) Unemployment allowances.
- (8) Insurance against sickness and accident.

LAND:-

- (1) Land system should be changed so as to remove all intermediaries between the cultivator and the State.
- (2) Creation of small holdings usually enough for one family to work in and no right of alienations.
- (3) Annulment of agricultural indebtedness, partial compensation being paid.
- (4) Formation of producers and consumers cooperative societies

SOCIAL:-

- (1) Removal of untouchability and all degrading barriers between man and man.
- (2) Abolition of *purdah* for women, equal legal and civic status for men and women.

FURTHER RESOLUTIONS

The League further resolved that in view of the fact that there is little likelihood of the British Parliament accepting the constitution of the All Parties Conference within the year and that the Congress will stand committed to full independence next year, and further in view of the fact that members of the Independence League being also members of the Congress have to work for the Congress programme, the League is of opinion that for the present its activities should be confined to the following:-

- (1) Where possible to start branches of the League.
- (2) Help in formation of workers' and peasants' unions.
- (3) To publish literature in provincial languages and popularise the objects of the League.
- (4) To help in strengthening Congress organisation and further its programme.

The League recommended this programme to the All India Council as the basis of work for the present year. The League appointed a propaganda committee and further determined to open a village centre for work among the peasantry.

7. To S. Srinivasa Iyengar¹

May 8th, 1929

Dear Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar,

You must have received my notice convening a meeting of the Independence for India League Council in Bombay on the 23rd May. I have included in the agenda a consideration of the question of our attitude to the Council elections. I have been reading carefully what you and others in Madras have said in regard to this matter. I have also read the resolution of the Tamil Nad P.C.C.² Personally I find myself in total disagreement with the plea for an acceptance of office as ministers or even for supporting others to retain this office. Whatever arguments there may be in favour of this I cannot reconcile it either with independence or with anything that has a remote resemblance to

1. A.I.C.C. File N. 7/1928, p. 69, N.M.M.L.

2. The Tamil Nadu provincial Congress committee, following the precedent of the Bengal committee, resolved to constitute an election board of its own for Tamil Nadu, and favoured acceptance of office by Congress members.

revolution of any kind. There are obviously marked differences of opinion on this subject. It is therefore desirable that the matter should be considered by our League.

I hope to be in Bombay on the morning of the 22nd. I trust you will also come early.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. To Members of the Central and Provincial Councils of the League¹

November 15, 1929

Dear Sir,

You are aware that our League has hardly functioned this year. Our Central Council has met once and various provincial Leagues have also held their meetings, but on the whole it may be said that the Independence League has lain in a dormant condition. Without going into past history, the question arises what we should do in the future. It is clear that the need for the League is quite as great today as at any time in the past.

I shall be glad if you will kindly let me have your advice as to what should be done. In particular I would like to have your opinion on the following questions.

1. Should a general meeting of the members of the League be convened some time during the next Congress session? I might mention that it is next to impossible to know who is a member and who is not. I have a register of such members as have paid their subscriptions to this office. I have also some record of members, a percentage of whose subscriptions has been sent to this office. But many provinces have not sent any part of the members' fees and I have no information whatever of their membership.

2. Should a meeting of the Central Council of the League be convened at Lahore? Even the Central Council is a somewhat nebulous body, but most of the members are certainly known. The representatives of some provinces are not known.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 7/1928, p. 39, N.M.M.L.

3. What is to be done to provincial Councils which have not sent any part of the members' fees to headquarters in spite of every effort? One province informs us that they had a large membership and promised to send half the membership fees, according to our rules, within a week. It is now over a year since this promise was made and no money has been received. Under these circumstances what is this office to do? Are we to treat such provincial branches as branches of the League or not? How is it possible for this office to draw the line unless some strictness is observed by us in enforcing our rules?

I am sending this letter to the members of the Central Council (such as are now in our office) and to provincial branches. I shall be glad if the latter will confirm who their representatives on the Central Council are and also if they will kindly send me a brief report of any work done by them in the course of the year.

As there is little time left before the Congress an early answer will be appreciated.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

9. To Members of the Central Council of the League¹

Allahabad
December 7th, 1929

Dear Sir,

It appears to be the desire of many members of the Council that a meeting of the Council should be held during the Congress week in Lahore. I think this is very desirable. We should definitely decide where we stand and what we propose to do. At the present moment it is not quite clear who is in the Council or who is not. Some provinces have not sent any part of their subscription and it is not known if any has been realised. Intimation has been received that some of these provincial councils are not in existence now and resignations have

¹ A.I.C.C. File No. 7/1928, p. 25, N.M.M.L.

also been received from members of the Council. I am however sending this notice to all persons who are likely to be members of the Council.

I suggest that a meeting of the Council be held on the 25th December in the evening in Lajpat Rai Nagar, Lahore. It is difficult to fix a definite place now but members of the Council can easily find it out for themselves by a reference to the A.I.C.C. office in Lahore. They are requested to inform the A.I.C.C. office therefore of their addresses in Lahore. The meeting of the 25th may not be convenient to all members. If so we can adjourn it after some discussion to another time. I trust you will be able to come.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

LEAGUE AGAINST
IMPERIALISM 1929

1. To V. Chattopadhyaya¹

...The many messages that were received from outside organisations, thanks to your efforts, were very much appreciated. I may add however no message from the Perhipunan Indonesia reached us. Probably this was suppressed *en route*.

The Congress has passed a resolution calling upon the All India Committee to organise a Foreign Department. I have been asked to take the necessary steps to do this. I should particularly like to have full names and addresses of foreign organizations. I have been asking you to send me these addresses for a long time but you have not done so. I hope you will kindly do so at once.

The Congress also passed a resolution about summoning a Pan-Asiatic Conference in India in 1930. Nobody quite understands what this means, including the mover of this resolution². However it is a fine-sounding name and it was easily passed. I doubt if it is at all possible to hold any such gathering in India.

One resolution of the Congress sent hearty congratulations to the people of China "on their having attained their full and complete freedom." This is of course entirely wrong and some of us opposed the resolution but few people knew the facts and the resolution was passed in spite of our opposition.

I suppose you have learnt that I have been elected President of the All India Trade Union Congress for the year. Also that the Congress has affiliated itself to your League. The year is likely to be a heavy one both from the labour and the political point of view...

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 1(ii) (Pt. III)/1929, p. 173, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

2. This resolution was moved by S. Satyamurti.

2. To James Maxton¹

16 January 1929

Dear Sir,

Your cablegram conveying the fraternal greetings of the League against Imperialism to the National Congress was received by us in Calcutta and was read at the open session of the Congress. Permit me on behalf of the Congress to express our gratitude for your good wishes. The National Congress has come into close touch with the League against Imperialism in the course of the last two years and knows well how valiantly the League is fighting against great odds for the freedom of all oppressed peoples. In this great fight the Congress offers the League its fullest cooperation.

It was humiliating for us to find that your fraternal delegate Mr. Johnston had been arrested by the British Government and was thus unable to take part in our deliberations. You will appreciate from this act of the government how much they dislike the Congress developing contacts with outside organizations and specially with your League. The Congress passed a resolution of strong protest against this arrest and deportation.

With fraternal greetings.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-91/1928-29, p. 73, N.M.M.L.

3. To V. Chattopadhyaya¹

23 January 1929

My dear Chatto,

I have just received your letter of the 2nd January as well as a copy of your Statutes which were sent with your covering letter dated December

1. A.I.C.C. File No. FD 1(ii) (Pt II)/1929, p. 105, N.M.M.L.

19th. I cannot write to you anything about the latter just yet. I shall go through them and perhaps next week I may have something to say in regard to it.

I think I have already written to you about the Johnston affair. A few days before the Jharia Congress he got an order from the Government of Bengal to leave the country. He sent a reply to that and later came to Jharia. I met him there for a while. He attended and spoke at the first day's session of the Congress. On our way back from the Congress late in the evening he was arrested and taken to Bombay and I take it that he sailed from Bombay. I believe Joshi is writing officially to the Governments of Bengal and Bombay to inquire from them the whereabouts of Johnston.

You must know that the Workers and Peasants Party at their meeting in Calcutta² decided not to permit their members to join the Independence for India League. This was not a very wise decision I think. Various other factors too have gone to weaken the League.

I hope you will expedite matters about the Information Bureau and will specially send me its address very soon. I am very keen on showing results.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. 21 December 1928.

4. To B. G. Lokhare¹

28 January 1929

Dear Lokhare,²

Thank you for your letter enclosing a copy of the letter you have sent to the League against Imperialism. It will be desirable for Hardikar to try to pick up a little knowledge of French. He cannot learn much I am afraid quickly but anyway he will find it easier to travel about.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-8/1929 (Pt. II) p. 281, N.M.M.L.

2. Close associate of Dr. N. S. Hardikar.

As regards study if he could read up something about modern socialistic movements in Europe and try to understand what the Second International stands for and what the Third International is aiming at and why they are in conflict with each other he will be able to follow European politics very much better.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. To R. Bridgeman¹

31 January 1929

My dear Bridgeman,

Your cablegram² regarding Afghanistan came yesterday morning. I am issuing it to the press. The Afghan trouble seems likely to last some time and there appear to be infinite possibilities of its developing into something vaster. There is of course strong sympathy in India for Amanullah. Among the Mohamadans there were many whose religious scruples were badly shocked by Amanullah's reforms. But even they are veering round to his side because they feel that the British are against Amanullah.

I hope you and Maxton were none the worse for your enforced detention at Ostend.³

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 22/1929, p. 43, N.M.M.L.

2. In this cable the British section of the League against Imperialism expressed its sympathy with the progressive elements in Afghanistan and congratulated the Indian people on also showing sympathy.

3. They were detained at Ostend on 14 January 1929 for a day before being allowed to enter Belgium.

6. To R. Bridgeman¹

March 13th, 1929

My dear Bridgeman,
 Many thanks for the cutting from the *Forward*² giving your reply to MacDonald's attack upon the League. You may have noticed that the League has come in for a great deal of attention in official circles in India. References have been made to it repeatedly by government spokesmen in the Assembly. It is obvious that the activities of the League reduce the government to a state bordering on panic. They are trying to make out that the League is a purely communist organisation. This of course is bunkum.

Yours sincerely,
 Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File F.D. 23/1929-30, p. 134, N.M.M.L.
2. A monthly journal published in Belfast.

7. To V. Chattopadhyaya¹

4 April 1929

My dear Chatto,
 I received your cable yesterday informing me that you had joined office. I was glad to learn of it. For many weeks past I have had no letters at all from your office. Very likely this is due to the kind attention of our government who do not wish us to be corrupted by your influence. It is rather annoying but still I do not quite see how we can help these unwarranted attentions.

You will no doubt have read in the papers all about the arrests and the Meerut trial. I am sending you a copy of a letter I have written to Saklatvala as well as a copy of the complaint in the trial. You will find that the League against Imperialism figures prominently as an

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 1(ii)/1929 (Pt. II) p. 96, N.M.M.L.

organisation "controlled by and subject to" the Communist International. It is unfortunate that the British Government is so extraordinarily stupid. I hate stupidity in my opponent.

I am glad to know that Nanu² is going ahead with the Information Bureau.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. A.C.N. Nambiar (b. 1896); an exile in Germany till 1947; Indian ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany 1955-58.

8. To V. Chattopadhyaya¹

April 25th, 1929

...You must be following events in India from the newspapers. You must have seen that a committee has been started to help in the defence in the Meerut trial. This committee includes my father, Ansari and some others. The defence is bound to cost a fair amount of money. The committee has appealed for this money but so far there has not been very great response. I wonder if any help could come to us from organisations in Europe. They need not send very big sums but even moderate sums accompanied by their sympathy would be very welcome. Any such moneys should be sent to me. I might add that the Meerut trial indirectly hits the League against Imperialism. I have already sent you a copy of the complaint in the case. You will find in this that the League is mentioned as one of the bodies subordinate to and controlled by the Communist International and hence a very dangerous organization. It is therefore worthwhile for the League and its associate bodies to take interest in the matter...

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 1(ii) (Pt. II)/1929, pp. 190-191, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

9. To V. Chattopadhyaya¹

May 7th, 1929

My dear Chatto,

I have repeatedly asked you to issue a list of the names and addresses of all organizations affiliated or associated with the League against Imperialism. I do not know why you did not do so. A little pamphlet containing the names and addresses of these organizations and their office-bearers as well as the names and addresses of the members of your Executive Council and General Council would be of the greatest help to put people in touch with each other. As you know a strenuous attempt is being made to run down the League against Imperialism. To meet this attack facts are necessary and the best facts are the names of peoples and organizations connected with it. I would beg of you to take this matter in hand immediately. Even if you do not get this printed send me a typed copy immediately.

You will notice that arrests and house searches continue and are being extended to nationalists pure and simple. There is no doubt that this kind of thing will increase.

My own personal difficulties are greatly increased by the illnesses of Krishna and Kamala. Krishna is still in hospital in Calcutta. Probably she will not leave it without being operated upon. Kamala has had another attack and it is extraordinarily difficult to leave her even for a short time. As soon as the attack subsides I shall take her to Calcutta. Any number of operations are better than these attacks of severe pain.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 1/1929-30, p. 75, N.M.M.L.

10. To V. Chattopadhyaya¹

Camp Bombay
22 May 1929

My dear Chatto,

In response to your cablegram I am sending you an article for your review.² I am afraid this is a scrappy affair hastily dictated. But what more can you expect of me? Somehow I cannot develop the mood for writing. I am too worried both in the political sense and the domestic sense. Krishna has just got over her operation and is progressing well. Kamala however presents a more serious case. They are both in hospital in Calcutta where I shall have to go again soon.

Srinivasa Iyengar has been behaving in a most extraordinary manner. He seems to be bent on creating trouble. His latest stunt is the acceptance of office, the ministries. How he can reconcile this with independence and the like passes my comprehension. The irony of it is that even some of the moderates are in favour of refusal of office now.

I am on my way to Bombay to attend meetings of the Independence League and the A.I.C.C. There is likely to be trouble there. You will know of it perhaps before you get this letter.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 1(ii) (Pt. III)/1929, p. 151, N.M.M.L.
2. See following item.

11. The Coming Crisis in India¹

If the measure of repression and terrorism that a government indulges in against popular movements in the country, the number of arrests and trials and convictions and round-ups and house searches and shootings, is the measure of the strength of those popular movements, then it may be said without doubt that both the nationalist and labour

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 1/1929, (Part I) pp. 9-13, N.M.M.L.
An article sent to V. Chattopadhyaya on 22 May 1929 for publication in the *Anti-Imperialist Review*.

movements in India have gained in strength tremendously. The last few months have seen a succession of these acts of repression and every day brings news of fresh arrests and house searches and labour troubles. Many prominent leaders of the national and labour movements have been convicted and sentenced. A great conspiracy case, in which also the leaders of both the national and labour movements are involved, is beginning at Meerut; and it appears that several other such conspiracy cases are being prepared by the British Government in India.

It is obvious that this feverish activity of government to repress the forces ranged against it indicates clearly enough that the government is frightened at the strength of these forces and wants to suppress them before they grow strong enough to enforce their will. The state of nerves of the government was well evidenced some days ago at Meerut and elsewhere. On the 9th of May there was practically a state of siege in the city of Meerut. All arrivals at the station were scrutinised and the whole place resembled a military encampment. Evidently the government remembered what had taken place just seventytwo years ago on May 10th, 1857 when a great rising against the British occupation began in Meerut. Evidently the government was in a state of fear lest some repetition of this may take place on its anniversary. There was no talk or hint of this on the popular side but a guilty conscience makes cowards of us all and specially of governments that are based on forcible exploitation of the people.

The situation in India is complicated enough and it is not easy to analyse it in the space of a short article. Some facts however stand out. The national movement, after some years of quiescence and reformist activities in the official-ridden legislatures of the country, was again gathering strength and looking to more effective and direct methods of action. All along the national front there was a very noticeable toning up. Even the moderates and liberals of Indian politics approvingly adopted some of the methods which frightened them some years ago. They talked of boycotts of the Simon Commission and of British goods and cloth and in a large measure cooperated with other more advanced groups to make the boycott of the Simon Commission the great success that it was. In the National Congress the left wing elements gathered strength and reference was continuously made to a programme of direct action involving non-payment of taxes.

The movement for complete independence for India also gathered great strength and the Congress a year and a half ago formally adopted independence as its objective. But a fear of the consequences of an open avowal induced many of the leaders to refrain from doing so. The Congress resolution was therefore a great step in the right direction.

At the next Congress held at Calcutta last December, owing to a variety of reasons, strenuous attempts were made to obscure the issue of independence. The resolution adopted at Calcutta was a slight going back on independence. As a matter of fact however that very resolution pledges the Congress not only to independence at the end of this year but also to a definite policy of direct action in order to achieve it.

Another feature of the national movement is the broader and more international vision that is gradually animating it. This is the direct consequence of its association with the League against Imperialism. For the last two years the Congress has passed a war danger resolution in which it has made it clear that it will not help the British Government in any way in any imperialist war that it might undertake. Further, it has made it clear that in case any attempt is made to force India in any such imperialist adventure, the National Congress would advise the people to withdraw all cooperation with government. The Congress at its last session received a large number of messages of greetings from foreign countries and organizations. This was a welcome evidence of foreign contacts that the National Congress is developing. In order to further them the Congress has started a foreign department.

Another very obvious feature of this situation in India is the rapid growth of trade unions and labour movements with a militant outlook. As elsewhere the labour movement has its two wings and there is often conflict between the two. But the repressive policy of government and the intolerable conditions of workers is strengthening the movement at its very basis i.e. in the rank and file. And once the rank and file is imbued with this spirit it will not be possible for any weak leader to betray it. A very illuminating example of the spirit of the rank and file was recently seen in Bombay where there is today the best organised and the strongest labour union, the Girni Kamgar Union in the textile mills of Bombay. In order to crush this Union which had carried out a very successful six months' strike involving over 100,000 workers last year,² almost all its prominent workers and leaders were arrested and are now being tried. But in spite of this wholesale removal the Union gathered strength and some weeks ago there was again a conflict between the millowners and the workers on the ground of victimization of union officials and a general strike again involving more than 100,000 workers took place. That strike shows that the strength of the movement lay with the rank and file which had developed a strong feeling of class solidarity and not merely in a handful of leaders. That strike is still continuing in spite of the strong opposition of the millowners and the government and even the moderate leaders of labour.

2. April-October 1928.



WITH SAROJINI NAIDU AND OTHERS.
Lucknow, 1929.

47

Amst. Museum

Alkmaar

Jan 23-1928

17

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S. n. 13046

My dear Bapu,

Your letter came as a bit of a shock and was painful reading. Painful because with retention logic you had anticipated certain conclusions which I had not considered possible or even thought of in this context. You talk about my coming on 'your mission' against you and of 'imposing my views'. I have no particular business to interfere nor had I thought of the possibility of any dispute between you and me. I had certainly thought of differences of opinion, which may be fundamental, and of my placing a few questions in regard to certain matters which may not meet with your approval. But I felt that you would certainly desire me to follow that line, even though you disagreed with it, if you thought that I was quite clear about it in my own mind. And even if there were possibilities of conflict on some points, this offered to me absolutely no necessity for this dispute or conflict to lead to the many other points on which I found this must be even considerably ground for common action. You have refused to shake out your relations with him. Is any compromise from me necessary that nothing between us can better be after or done, my deep regard and affection for you? That regard and affection is certainly personal, but it is something more. No one has cared me and helped me more than you and I am sure that your guiding hand has been there can be no question of our personal relations suffering. Between in the wider sphere am I at you child in politics, though perhaps a friend and mentor-child?

I should very much like to discuss many things with you and I cannot say often. I shall certainly not change many of my present opinions after my discussion with you. I hope I am not rigid in mind and outlook and nothing at all. Please me more than to be understood.

This rapid rise of the labour movement and its gradual rapprochement with the advanced elements in the national movement has exercised and frightened the government. The British rulers realised that the real danger to them came from mass organization. They have therefore taken a number of steps to suppress the rise of labour. Legislation has been passed not only to prevent outsiders from coming into India to work with labour but also to prevent strikes and trade union organization. One of these measures, the Public Safety Bill, was enacted by the Viceroy by executive fiat as it could not be passed in the Legislative Assembly. In addition to these measures a great conspiracy trial is being started at Meerut. The ordinary methods of repressing labour wherever there is a conflict with the big capitalists are of course always in force. The police and the military are always handy to suppress labour.

It is obvious, both from the legislation passed by government and from the difficulty experienced in obtaining passports by Indians to go out of the country and by many foreigners to come into the country, that the government fears all foreign contacts with India and seeks to put an end to them except such as happen to be with British imperialists. The League against Imperialism has become a pet bogey of the government and every effort is being made to run it down as a purely communist organization under the control of Moscow. Many attacks have been made on the League from the official benches in the Legislative Assembly and a similar reference has been made to it in the indictment in the Meerut case. Very probably an attempt will be made in this case to run it down still further and it may be that the government may go to the length of declaring it an illegal organization, association with which in itself constitutes an offence. This would have been done long ago but for the fact that the National Congress was an associate body and recently the All India Trade Union Congress has affiliated itself to it.

It is also probable that, as the situation develops, the British Government can attack directly the leaders of the independence movement and make it a criminal offence to claim independence. From the point of view of those who work for independence nothing could be better because then the straight issue will be before the people. The movement for independence is too widespread and deep-rooted to be suppressed by legal or any other action.

The life of the official legislatures in the country is coming to an end and fresh elections are taking place soon. These elections may cause some friction and trouble in the Congress ranks. Indeed it is already evident that some Congressmen are being greatly attracted to the idea

of accepting ministerial office in these bogus legislatures. The ministers are really ministers of the people in name only. They are bound hand and foot to the British imperialists. But the lure of office is great and some may succumb to it. It is practically certain however that the National Congress will strongly oppose this movement. Indeed the tendency is that the legislatures should again be boycotted or that the old Sinn Fein methods, of getting elected and not attending, be adopted.

All indications point to an approaching crisis. This may come within the next few months. It cannot be delayed much longer than the beginning of next year. In this crisis the advanced elements in the National Congress and left wing of labour will probably cooperate. The centre elements in the Congress may remain neutral for some time but they are likely to be dragged in before long. The right wing elements in the country and in labour will probably side with the British exploiters of the country. Much depends of course on the international situation. But whatever the immediate outcome of the struggle may be it is certain that the British Government cannot crush the nationalist and labour movements of the country.

In this struggle the burden will naturally fall on the people of India. Other peoples, themselves suffering exploitation or foreign domination, cannot be expected to help much. But it is a truism in politics that the fate of India powerfully affects the fate of other countries and no other country or individual who is exploited can afford to be indifferent to what happens in India. India is beginning to realise that her problem is not merely the national problem of gaining political independence but an international problem of ridding the world of exploitation. Naturally her own efforts are largely limited to the national problem but she looks with the deepest interest to other phases of this problem in other countries and, when opportunity offers itself, she will gladly cooperate with these countries. Realising, as she does, that she must rely on her own strength and resources, she hopes that other countries and other peoples will send to her their good wishes in her arduous struggle and will help her whenever an opportunity presents itself.

Owing to passport and other difficulties the National Congress has been unable to send a strong delegation as it would have liked to do, to the Second World Congress of the League against Imperialism. The National Congress will however be represented by a member of its executive committee who is also the Treasurer of the Congress, Mr. Shiva Prasad Gupta. Mr. Gupta carries with him to the World Congress of the League against Imperialism the greetings of the Indian people to the representatives of all the countries and peoples who are oppressed and exploited today. The people of India will watch with great interest

the proceedings of the World Congress and hope that this meeting will result in the strengthening of the League against Imperialism and the formulation of an effective programme for the advancement of the ideals of the League.

12. To Taraknath Das¹

June 21st, 1929

...I take it that you refer to the League against Imperialism when you say that in your opinion the Indian National Congress should not be affiliated with any organisation with communistic tendencies. I am afraid that the subject is a vast one to be disposed of in a letter. So far as the League is concerned I happen to know a good deal about it having been connected with it right from the very beginning. I believe in it as an organisation which brings together many diverse peoples and movements on the common plank of anti-imperialism and I think that the National Congress should certainly associate itself with this movement...

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 20/1929 (Pt. II), p. 75, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

13. To Secretary, League against Imperialism¹

June 26th, 1929

Dear Comrade,

I gather from the papers that the Second World Congress of the League will be held in Berlin² and not in Paris. This letter will probably reach you just before the Congress meets.

The National Congress has already appointed a special delegate Mr. Shiva Prasad Gupta to your World Congress. I trust that he will personally convey to your Congress the greetings and good wishes of the National Congress and will join in your deliberations at this critical juncture. May I also, on behalf of the National Congress of which I

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 1(ii) (Pt. I)/1929, p. 1, N.M.M.L.

2. The Congress was in fact held at Frankfurt on 21 July 1929.

have the honour to be the General Secretary, send you a word of greeting and good cheer. You are doubtless aware that an effort is being made in India to make it appear that the League against Imperialism is opposed to the ideas of the National Congress or of free India. I can assure you however that in spite of all this propaganda the National Congress realises the good work that the League has done and appreciates its association with it. On behalf of it therefore I wish you all success in your Congress and hope that your joint labours will result in hastening the day of liberation of all who are oppressed.

May I personally express my regret at my inability to be present at your second Congress? It was a great privilege for me to have attended the first Congress at Brussels. I would have liked greatly to be able to attend your second Congress also and renew acquaintance with many of the friends and comrades with whom I had the pleasure of working in Brussels. But circumstances compel me to remain in India and I have to be content with sending you and through you to our other friends and comrades my greetings and good wishes.

Yours fraternally,
Jawaharlal Nehru

14. To Shiva Prasad Gupta¹

June 27th, 1929

My dear Shiva Prasad,

I have not heard from you since your departure to Europe. I am told that you are at present somewhere in Norway admiring the beautiful fjords of that northern country. The very thought of these fjords makes me long to be there.

I am sending a copy of this letter c/o the League against Imperialism as you may be attending their Congress when this letter reaches Berlin. You must have heard of course that the Congress is going to be held in Berlin and not in Paris. I believe it begins on the 20th July. I hope you will attend it and make the acquaintance of people from various parts of the world. You will of course meet our friend Chatto. You will also meet Roger Baldwin from America. He is a very fine man and I have great regard for him. Also Reginald Bridgeman from

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 1(ii) (Pt. I)/1929, pp. 4-5, N.M.M.L.

England. He is one of the very few Englishmen who can view the Indian question minus the English prejudices. He has just failed in getting into Parliament as a Labour member.

The Meerut trial is proceeding here. The prosecution is making every effort to show that the accused are anti-nationalists and that the League against Imperialism is an out and out creature of the Communist International. This is incorrect as anyone intimately connected with the League knows. I should like you to find out the true position so that you may know these at first hand. The fact is that although the League has a strong communist element in it, it has an even stronger non-communist element. We have repeatedly at the League Executive Committee meetings discussed this question. It was clear that if the communists wanted to dominate it entirely many others will leave the League and the whole thing would collapse. On the other hand it was equally clear that if the communists left the League there would be no vitality left in it. The whole thing could proceed only on a basis of cooperation between the two groups trying to dominate over the other.

Now that the government here is making a dead set against the League it seems to me all the more incumbent that we should stick by it. I am therefore very glad that you have been formally nominated to represent the National Congress at the World Congress of the League.

Your resignation from the Congress Treasurership was considered in Bombay last month. As there was no other suitable Treasurer in view it was decided not to make any change for the present.

We have got to face a very heavy programme of Congress organization here. The A.I.C.C. has laid down that unless we send a certain proportion of members the committee will be disaffiliated so that there is the chance of the whole of the U.P.P.C.C. being disaffiliated. Last week we had a meeting of the P.C.C. in Lucknow.

Write to me from time to time and let me know what your programme is. When do you propose to come back?

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

15. To Roger Baldwin¹

June 27th, 1929

My dear Baldwin,

Two or three days ago I wrote to you to New York. It has just struck me that you will be in Europe when the letter reaches New York. I am therefore sending this to Berlin.

At Dhan Gopal Mukherji's² suggestion I have sent you to New York a copy of my little book *Soviet Russia*. I would have sent this much earlier but for the fact that I did not think it was a solid enough book to interest you. It is just a collection of hastily written newspaper articles.

I have just received from a bookseller in London a copy of your *Civil Liberties in Russia*. I ordered it last year and it has taken a mighty long time in coming. I am looking forward to reading it very much. For the present my father has taken possession of it.

I am disappointed at not being able to attend the League Congress where I could meet you again. But the British Government in India is such a handful that one has little leisure to do the many things one wants to do. My thoughts will however be with you and our other friends and I shall hope that the Congress does good work not only in the region of talk but also of solid work.

With greetings and all good wishes,

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 16/1929, p. 15, N.M.M.L.

2. Indian author settled in the United States; author of *My Brother's Face*; first met Jawaharlal in Geneva in 1927.

16. To V. Chattopadhyaya¹

August 1st, 1929

My dear Chatto,

You have no doubt been very busy with your Congress. Hence no letter

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 1(ii) (Pt. I)/1929, p. 21, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

from you. We have just had a visit from Sarojini. She gave me some news of you and Nanu. She is full of America as you must know.

My wife's health is again giving trouble. I wish the doctors to operate upon her and put an end to this continual pain. It may perhaps be that an operation may take place some time this month. I have been feeling rather seedy for some time past. I do not know what to do. There appear to be no holidays for those engaged in political work in this country. As the year advances more and more work has to be done. I wish I could leave India for a month or two and then come back. It would set me up for a long time. But no such luck...

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

17. To Taraknath Das¹

August 25th, 1929

Dear Mr. Das,

... I think you are incorrect in calling the League against Imperialism a communist organisation. Undoubtedly it has communists and you may even say that its outlook to some extent is communistic. But at the same time it has many non-communists. The National Congress cooperates with it in so far as its activities are anti-imperialist. The Congress is prepared to cooperate with any other organisation or state whether it is monarchical, republican or fascist.

About bringing out a German edition of Dr. Sunderland's book I should like to have some idea of the amount required before I can put the matter up before the Congress Working Committee. It is highly unusual, indeed I do not know of a precedent for the Congress to have books published anywhere. I do not personally agree with this policy but there it is. I shall be surprised if the Working Committee undertakes to meet the cost of publishing a German edition of *India in Bondage*. Is it not possible for a German publisher to take it up? Anyhow if I could be given some idea of the amount required I would put the matter up before the Working Committee.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 20/1929 (Pt. IV) p. 281, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

18. To Edo Fimmen¹

November 25th, 1929

My dear Fimmen,

Thank you for your letter of the 31st October. I am very sorry to learn of the condition of the League against Imperialism. Baldwin has also written to me on the subject and the report of our delegate Shiva Prasad Gupta has also come in. It is extraordinarily difficult to do anything by correspondence but I am entirely with you in regard to the suggestion you make. The League will certainly collapse completely if it becomes a purely communist organisation. I propose to write accordingly to them.

I am looking forward to your longer letter that you have promised.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 1(ii) (Pt. III)/1929, p. 141, N.M.M.L.

19. To V. Chattopadhyaya¹

November 25th, 1929

My dear Chatto,

I do not know if I have previously acknowledged your letter of the 30th October. I have been very much troubled about the League. Reports received from Edo Fimmen and Roger Baldwin have been very unfavourable. You will remember that in the early stages of the League we discussed repeatedly what the position of the communists and non-communists should be in the League. It is clear that the League was not a purely communist organization as you have yourself repeated. It was an organisation which brought together all anti-imperialist elements whether communists or not. It appears however that the non-communist elements have been driven out of the League. This seems to me a very

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 1(ii) (Pt. III)/1929, p. 140, N.M.M.L.

unfortunate policy which is bound to end in the collapse of the League. There are many people in the National Congress here as well as in the Trade Union Congress who are taking exception to certain activities of the League and it may not be easy to continue affiliations.

Regarding the National Congress you will remember that it was not affiliated to you but associated with you. This was made quite clear even in the resolution passed by the All India Committee. I wrote to you about it subsequently when you sent me the draft statutes. I do not know what happened later. But I think that this point should be made clear so that it may not be difficult for organisations like the National Congress to be associated with you.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

20. To Roger Baldwin¹

November 25th, 1929

My dear Baldwin,

I have just received your letter of the 24th October. I have also just heard from Edo Fimmen and he makes the same complaint as you do regarding the League against Imperialism. He says that it should be made perfectly clear by the non-communists in the League that they can only continue in the League provided they are given a proper place in it. They cannot continue in it if the League becomes a purely communist organisation. I have written to the League headquarters on the subject.

Our bulletins will be sent to you regularly and you will find some reference to political prisoners in them. As a matter of fact the names and lists given there are by no means complete. There is some talk of amnesty here but in spite of this arrests and convictions continue.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 16/1929, p. 81, N.M.M.L.

I was sorry about Maxton. I have yet to know the real reasons why he was expelled². It seems to me that some of our friends have a peculiar knack of doing things the wrong way. I have just learnt that Einstein has resigned from the Honorary Presidentship of the League on the ground of its anti-Zionist policy. I do not know very much about the conflict between Arab and Jew in Palestine but it is certainly a pity to lose Einstein.

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Maxton was expelled in September 1929 for failing to prevent the Independent Labour Party's support of the Labour Government's policy in India, Egypt and elsewhere.

PUBLIC SAFETY BILL

1. Statement to the Press¹

After listening to Mr. Crerar's² laboured eloquence³ for nearly an hour I wondered if he knew what he was talking about. His terrifying picture of the consequences of the beast, called Communism, might well have been taken in its entirety from the *Daily Mail* of London or some other paper of that kind. It is evident Mr. Crerar's knowledge of communism or socialism or any "ism" is of the feeblest kind. He tried to frighten people with dark hints about changing the structure of society. If Mr. Crerar is content with things as they are, he is at liberty to remain in his blissful condition; but others are not content and they propose to continue their efforts to improve society by reconstructing it on a better basis. The whole speech has little of argument or reason about it to show the necessity of the measure.

Mr. Crerar's mock-heroics are most amusing. In tragic tones he said, 'These are the facts. Find the remedy'. The remedy has been indicated often enough and it was indicated last time at the Calcutta Congress. If Mr. Crerar and his colleagues want to cure India of various diseases she suffers from, the only way is to accept that remedy. They are vastly mistaken if they imagine that by passing legislation of the kind indicated they can make their hold secure over India or stop the flow of ideas. If the Government of India is going to proscribe socialism they will have to consider whether they can cooperate with the Socialist Government of England of which there is a possibility within the next few months.

1. New Delhi, 4 February 1929. *The Tribune*, 6 February 1929.

2. Sir James Crerar (1877-1960); joined I.C.S. 1900; Home Secretary to the Government of India 1922-27; Home Member 1927-32.

3. Crerar's speech was an attack on communism as subversive of the social order. He alleged that the communist movement in India was being financed by communist agencies abroad, encouraged by communist emissaries, and affiliated to communist organisations such as the League against Imperialism. He attributed its strength to the youth movement and labour unions which tried to get a grip over strategic points by organising strikes in railways, docks and textile factories.

2. On the Public Safety Bill¹

I do not know if the second reading of the Public Safety Bill has been passed or not. Even if it has been passed, it cannot mean that the fight against it is at an end. Much has been said about the Bill in the Assembly. It is clear now that the Bill is really an attack on the national movement far more than on one or two odd communists who might come to India. The Bill punishes the intention of a person. The judge of this intention is the Viceroy. It is easy enough to imagine what tremendous power this vague phraseology, dealing with intention and possibilities of what might be, gives to an individual; and that individual is to be guided solely by police reports and the like. It is humanly impossible for the Executive Government not to take advantage of this power to crush anyone they do not like. There is also no doubt that the Bill, if passed, is bound to be followed by a similar attack on Indians.

Reference is frequently made in the Assembly to communism. It is obvious, however, that none of the hon'ble members suffer from the least knowledge of the subject. It would be a good thing if some classes on communism were opened for members of the Assembly, especially for the government benches. They would then be in a better position to consider and vote upon this Bill.

Ten years ago, almost to a day, another Bill was before the predecessor of this Assembly in the same city of Delhi. That Bill was opposed unanimously by the elected members, but by sheer force of an official bloc it was passed. That Bill and its consequences made history in India. The government could not have forgotten all that resulted from the passing of that measure. They passed the Rowlatt Bill despite all opposition, and strange to say this Act itself has never been applied in a single instance. History seems to be repeating itself and nationalist India should be content that it is.

1. Lahore, 7 February 1929. *The Tribune*, 9 February 1929.

3. Speech at Delhi¹

The arrest² of Mahatma Gandhi, a personality who is greatly revered throughout the world, is a great insult to the country and we should not rest until we have given a fit reply to it. History is repeating itself. Exactly ten years ago the foreign bureaucracy had managed to pass the Rowlatt Bill, popularly known as the Black Bill, in the teeth of strong public opposition, which resulted in the proclamation of martial law in the Punjab and shooting of innocent people. On 30th March 1919, Delhi observed complete *hartal* as a protest against Mahatma Gandhi's arrest and Swami Shraddhanand bared his breast before police bayonets in Chandni Chauk.

The government is once again perpetrating the same folly by trying to pass bills like the Public Safety Bill and the Trades Disputes Bill. The more I think over the situation, the happier I feel that we are going to begin freedom's battle once again from the stage where we left it ten years back. The Public Safety Bill is an attack on the liberty of thought, while the Trades Disputes Bill is a blow to liberty of action. I am sure that the government, by repeating such blunders, will soon revive the crisis that was created in 1919 and once again the country will launch the movement of noncooperation.

The arrest of Mahatma Gandhi is no insult to Mahatmaji because he is above all insults, but it is a great insult to the country and the only reply to it is to strengthen the boycott of foreign cloth and British goods and to make huge bonfires all over the country. Let us remember anything which is resented by the government means that it is to our benefit. The boycott of British goods is hitting the British Government on its tenderest part. A nation of shopkeepers cares more for money than for anything else.

The fight is on. Let us march on undaunted. We should make the Congress programme a success by recruitment of Congress members, enrolment of national volunteers and complete boycott of foreign cloth.

The government wants to snatch away the labourers' right of *hartal*, because it realises that peasants and labourers are the greatest force

1. 7 March 1929. *The Hindustan Times*, 9 March 1929.

This speech was delivered at a mass meeting of Delhi citizens presided over by Rafi Ahmad Kidwai.

2. On 4 March 1929 Mahatma Gandhi was arrested in Calcutta for promoting boycott of foreign cloth, but was released soon after.

today. It knows that the engine of hunger is most powerful and it is impossible to check its progress.

It was Delhi that led the movement of freedom in 1919. Let Delhi lead again and let the message of freedom emanate once again from this capital of India.

4. Statement to the Press¹

The long shadow of the Public Safety Bill is upon us. While the Honourable Members debate in the Council Chamber, New Delhi, the tentacles of the British administration have spread out over the length and breadth of India and seized many persons — Congressmen, labour leaders, and youth leaguers.

All have been caught in a widely-flung net² of the British Government. If this is a foretaste of the Bill, what of it when it is a law of the land to use or misuse as suits the heads of the Criminal Intelligence Department? The attack is primarily directed against the labour movement and the youth leagues. An ex-president of the All India Trade Union Congress³, the Secretary of the Bengal Federation of Labour⁴ and many other responsible leaders of trade unions have been arrested. Youth League offices have been searched everywhere and prominent officials of the League have been arrested. As was expected, the attack was specially directed against the Bombay Youth League and its gallant leader, Mr. Nariman⁵, and Secretary, Mr. Yusuf Meherally⁶.

1. Issued at Allahabad, 22 March 1929. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 23 March 1929.
2. On 20 March 1929 the British Government arrested a large number of Congress, communist and labour leaders and members of the youth league.
3. D. R. Thengdi, a communist and trade union leader; President All India Trade Union Congress 1925; d. 1933.
4. Kishorilal Ghosh, a lawyer and journalist of Calcutta; prominent trade union leader.
5. K. F. Nariman (1885-1948); a lawyer of Bombay; President of the Bombay Youth League 1928-29; President of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee 1929; Mayor of Bombay 1935; left Congress in 1937 and helped Bose in forming All India Forward Bloc 1939; rejoined Congress after 1947.
6. (1903-1950); started Youth League in Bombay in 1928; played a leading part in youth movement and organised All India Youth Conference in Bombay in 1929; edited monthly journal *Vanguard*; was one of the founders of the Congress Socialist Party and became its General Secretary in 1939; presided over All India Students' Conference, 1941, and was Mayor of Bombay, 1942-43; was arrested several times in connection with the nationalist movement.

My own young comrade in Allahabad, Puran Chand Joshi⁷, Secretary Allahabad Youth League, is among the arrested. I do not know if the government imagines it will strike terror in the hearts of those who work for labour or the youth movement by these arrests and searches.

Having the honour of being connected with both labour and youth, I am convinced that it is vastly mistaken. Labour and youth will take up the challenge and will stand by their comrades to the last. Labour and youth defy the government to do their worst. We welcome the conflict because we are sure about the ultimate result. I trust the Congress Committee will give every support to labour and youth movements and I trust youth everywhere will flock to the standard of their league. Let this be their answer to the challenge of government. I hope all members of youth leagues will also concentrate on boycott of foreign cloth and when they go home to their towns and villages during the vacation they will carry messages of boycott with them. The youth of Allahabad have already given a fitting answer to the government. I hope the whole province will follow the example.

7. Organised the U.P. branch of the Communist Party in 1928; convicted in the Meerut Conspiracy Case in 1929 and remained in jail till 1933; General Secretary of the Communist Party of India 1935-48.

5. On the Public Safety Bill¹

As is usual with Viceroy's, Lord Irwin has thought it fit to preach a sermon on the sins of Indian humanity; and to the sermon had been added threats of future action as well as the threat of the immediate enactment of the Public Safety Bill as an ordinance under section 72 of the Government of India Act. Only the day before, the Assembly had passed a resolution in which it had "assured the authorities of its full support in such reasonable steps as may be necessary to prevent the recurrence of such a crime". I am amazed to notice that no voice has been raised against this full-blooded assurance.

1. Speech at Allahabad, 13 April 1929. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 14 April 1929.

Every one in India knows what steps the government has taken in the past and is likely to take in the future in the name of law and order. Knowing this, the Assembly rushed in to give this wholly unnecessary assurance and within 24 hours the Assembly was to hear that even if the President² rules the Public Safety Bill out of order, the Viceroy in the plenitude of his power would make it a law off his own bat. If assurances were necessary it was for the Viceroy and the government to give them for future good behaviour.

The Viceroy has told us that the reprobation and condemnation of the throwing of the bombs must be unqualified. Evidently he suspected the bonafides of those who had so loudly condemned the bomb-throwers and thought that in their hearts there was not a whole-hearted condemnation. The Viceroy's suspicion may or may not be correct, but I wish to state that, much as many of us may grieve over the incident³ for reasons which the Viceroy may not appreciate, it is absurd to talk of unqualified condemnation of the young men who did it. No coward could have done it. Only the very brave could do it. Most of us who deeply regret it, do so because we believe that no mass movement can be built upon these acts and, without a mass movement, we feel we cannot create sanctions to enforce our will. Such acts must necessarily divert attention from the larger and more solid movement for which the country is preparing.

Some people with very vivid imaginations have connected the bombs with Moscow. For them everything they do not like comes from Moscow. They do not trouble themselves even to understand the psychology of Moscow. They do not know that Lenin turned his country from terrorism and put his faith in mass organisation. A French newspaper *Le Temps* has also ventured to drag in Moscow, but everybody who knows anything of French politics knows that this paper is intimately in accord with the British Foreign Office. An English newspaper has gone one step further and made the remarkable statement that the Hindustani Seva Dal is the same thing as Hindustan Socialist Republican Army. What the latter is, I do not know; but I do know what the Seva Dal is. It is an open organisation associated with the Congress which has nothing secret about it. I hope however in the

2. Vithalbhai Patel (1870-1933); elder brother of Vallabhbhai Patel; a barrister of the Bombay High Court; member of the Bombay Legislative Council 1914; member of the Legislative Assembly 1923; President of the Legislative Assembly 1925-30.

3. On 8 April 1929, when the Central Assembly was debating the Public Safety Bill, a bomb was thrown inside the House from the visitors' gallery by Bhagat Singh and B. K. Dutt.

fullness of time when freedom comes it will develop into our national republican army.

Lord Irwin has told us of the naked conflict between two contradictory philosophies; that of physical violence and that of reason and argument and persuasion. On which, may I ask, do Lord Irwin and government base their rule in India? Is the foreign army present here to reason with us sweetly? Are the mercenary Indian armies the embodiment of persuasion? Are the police, the shootings and the brutal assaults, vindictive legal processes? Were the *lathi* blows that fell on Lala Lajpat Rai an attempt to reason with him? Is the C.I.D. meant to help the flow of reason? Are our footsteps dogged wherever we go, our movements watched, our houses searched, our letters opened, and our young men sentenced, to promote the reign of reason? And today the trial⁴ of the Meerut 31 and the passage of the Trades Disputes Bill and the Public Safety Bill, the latter over the head of, and in insult of, the President of the Assembly — do they also signify reason and argument?

Lord Irwin should stick to his trade of government by violence and not talk about political philosophies which may raise inconvenient questions for him to answer. Does he deny that the British Government in India is based on, and maintained by, force? How then can he presume to talk of the virtues of nonviolence and of reason and argument? Mahatma Gandhi is justified in condemning violence. This is in accord with his whole philosophy of life and his practice. But Lord Irwin is not so justified. Let Lord Irwin and his government mend their ways and show by their own acts that they believe in reason and argument. Then they may earn the right to condemn others who indulge in violence.

So far as the Congress is concerned it has to choose carefully between the two methods regardless of what the Viceroy may or may not have said. The choice is between organised mass action of the nature of civil disobedience and non-payment of taxes and individual acts of violence. Such individual acts, however brave they may be, cannot help in creating mass action. They in fact retard it. We must therefore concentrate on building up an organisation which can offer effective battle on a mass scale by the withdrawal of cooperation from the British Government.

4. 31 persons were tried for conspiracy at Meerut; later Lester Hutchinson was included among the accused. The case was opened in June 1929 and dragged on for several years until in 1933 the Allahabad High Court on appeal from the special sessions court ended it by acquitting several of the accused and reducing drastically the sentences passed on others.

6. Comments on the Public Safety Bill¹

Sec. 2 (iii) (a)²

"Indirectly" — even theoretical and academic discussions can easily be brought into purview of section.

"Unlawful interference with ownership of property".

This may apply to any advocacy of a change in the economic system. The whole of clause (a) is probably contained in some form in the Penal Code and is thus entirely unnecessary.

Clause (b)³

"Or with any object the attainment of which is intended to conduce to that result."

There is no reference to force or violence in this clause and the second part of it makes it so vague that anything which the government dislikes can be brought in. Undoubtedly, passive resistance, civil disobedience, non-payment of taxes, can be brought in. Even far milder things may be considered by government to be intended to conduce to the ultimate subversion of the government established by law. There is no question of communism here. It is a direct attack on every form of direct action and indeed every strong action.

Sec. 2 (iii) (c)⁴

This clause is so wide that it can be made to apply to every member of the National Congress and the Trade Union Congress. Both of

1. 5 July 1929. A.I.C.C. File No. 6/1929, pp. 35-39, N.M.M.L.
2. (iii) "Person to whom this Act applies means any person who —
(a) directly or indirectly advocates the overthrow by force or violence of the government established by law in British India, or the unlawful destruction of property, or unlawful interference with the ownership of property."
3. "seeks to foment or utilise industrial or agrarian disputes or other disputes of a like nature with the direct object of subverting organised government in British India or with any object the attainment of which is intended to conduce to that result."
4. Sec. 2 (iii) (c) refers to a person who "is a member of, or is acting in association with any society or organisation, whether in British India or elsewhere, which advocates or encourages any such doctrine or activity as is described in sub-clause (a) or sub-clause (b) of this clause, or which is affiliated to or connected with, any such society or organisation."

these organizations are associated with the League against Imperialism and the government has merely to declare that the League is an organisation of the kind meant in the Act and automatically the Congress becomes a suspect body. Members of the British or American or other outside branches of the Congress, if they are not Indian British subjects will come within the purview of the Act.

Sec. 3 (i)⁵

All that is necessary is for the Governor-General in Council to be satisfied.

Sec. 4⁶

Clause (a) refers to monies sent from outside to British India but clause (b) refers to money in British India. All that has to be shown is that the money is intended to be applied in accordance with any directions given from outside India. If for instance it is shown that the League against Imperialism wants us to boycott foreign cloth or the Simon Commission and we propose to spend money on these boycotts, then immediately the Congress funds become liable to be confiscated.

The provision for appeals etc. is ridiculous.

The High Court can only set aside an order on ground that person is an "excepted person" and "on no other ground." Thus the High Court only considers trivial matters of residence etc.

The bench of 3 will be nominated by government itself. It will be shown secret documents etc. by government. The accused cannot see them. He will only be given a general idea of the case against him. It will be difficult for him to defend himself against secret accusations.

5. "If the Governor-General in Council is satisfied that any person is a person to whom this Act applies, he may by order in writing, direct such person to remove himself from British India within such time or in such manner and by such route and means as may be specified in the order and not to return thereto without the permission in writing of the Governor-General in Council."
6. "If the Governor-General in Council has reason to believe —
 - (a) that any moneys, securities, goods or credits have been or are about to be transmitted from any place outside British India by or on behalf of any such person as is described in sub clause (a), sub clause (b) or sub clause (c) of clause (iii) of Section 2 or by or on behalf of any society or organisation such as is described in sub clause (c) or that clause."
 - (b) that any moneys, securities, goods or credits or the sale proceeds of any securities or goods, are intended to be applied in British India in accordance with any directions or instructions given from outside British India by any such person, society or organisation as aforesaid."

A disobedience of the order to remove oneself makes one liable to be arrested without warrant and punished with imprisonment for a year.

Disobedience constitutes in doing nothing but remaining where one is.

Section 15, Clause 3⁷. Indemnification clause.

It is clear that under this Act a great deal can be done and if it is passed will be done which will be against law and equity. Such a clause thus is very necessary to protect these high-handed proceedings.

In the statement of objects and reasons stress is laid on the activities of the Communist International and upon their ultimate object of destroying by violence both the government established by law and the present economic organisation of society.

The bill itself does not refer to communism, as such its language is very wide. The whole bill applies not to acts but to intentions and the Governor-General in Council is the judge of the intention. This is dangerous enough at any time and in any country to make the Executive Government the judge of what is in the mind of those opposed to it. It is far more dangerous in India where there is a foreign government.

Crerar laid stress on activities for changing the present basis of society and private ownership. All legislation is meant to affect in some degree or other the basis of society e.g. death duties and inheritance which affects private property. By playing with the exchange the government can and does virtually confiscate enormous sums belonging to private owners. It is therefore ridiculous to talk about interfering with the ownership of property.

It may however be said that this does not touch the present basis of property. The structure remains. If the principal industries and lands were socialised this undoubtedly would change the basis. Is the bill aimed at preventing the spread of socialistic ideas? Socialism stands for cooperation and to bring this about state control, the advocacy of national control of a number of industries, such as coal or iron, would certainly interfere with the ownership of private property.

At one time many roads and bridges were private property and people had to pay toll in order to pass over them. Subsequently they were made state property. This process of socialisation has gone on all along the line and according to many people is bound to go on till the entire state is socialised and run on a more rational basis.

Crerar referred to all the industrial troubles and strikes in past years and seemed to imagine that one or two foreigners were at the bottom

7. Section 15 (3). "No prosecution or other legal proceeding whatsoever shall lie against any person in respect of anything in good faith done or intended to be done under this Act."

of all these troubles. A more ridiculous statement is difficult to imagine. Mr. Crerar must either be himself a very credulous person or must imagine that the House is very credulous to make a statement which every schoolboy knows is silly. All the resources of money, propaganda and the like are on the side of government and, in the case of labour disputes, on the side of the employers. To talk of one or two outsiders creating all the trouble in labour circles is to blind oneself to the facts of the situation which are that there is a great economic distress and until a radical cure is found for it it is sure to try to seek a cure by means of strikes and the like. A strike is always unfortunate and deplorable just as a fever is unfortunate and deplorable but it is no good cursing the fever. The wise man treats it and tries to remove the causes of it. Mr. Crerar apparently prefers the old methods of treating fevers and distempers of the body politic by the method of driving out and exorcising the demons by incantations and curses. Mr. Crerar and his government may live in the middle ages and believe in these methods. But even backward India has outgrown those times and these methods.

If socialism or communism are bad they have to be met in the open, discussed and defeated in argument. To try to suppress them forcibly is a method which is bound to fail because ideas are never suppressed in this way. What the government is entitled to do is to suppress the violent activities. No government should go beyond this and suppress ideas.

To describe the League against Imperialism as a purely communist body is entirely wrong. It is an organization which includes within its fold both communists and non-communists, both labour groups and nationalist groups. The Indian National Congress is an associate body. Is the Congress a communist organization? The various national groups in Asia and Africa and America affiliated to it, are they all communist in inspiration and working? The secretaries of the League at present may be communists. But the President, James Maxton, who is also the Chairman of the Independent Labour Party of England, and a majority of the members of the Executive Committee are not communists. Certainly the League contains people who are not afraid to cooperate with communists where their interests are alike. But they cooperate on their own terms, not the terms of the communists. Why do they so cooperate? Because they find that there is a great deal in common, in so far as the fight for national freedom and against the imperialist idea is concerned, between the two. We are prepared to cooperate with anybody but the terms shall be of our choosing. We have in the past in a large measure cooperated with the British Government in India. We cooperate with it in spite of our belief that it

has done and is doing tremendous injuries to India. If we have cooperated with them in the past and in the present, there is no one with whom we cannot cooperate. Certainly we can cooperate in many matters with the communists where their paths and ours overlap. Where they do not overlap we shall not only not cooperate with them but resist them. Having had enough experience of cooperation with foreigners who have taken possession of our country and who retain it despite the declared will of the people Mr. Crerar may rest assured that we propose to take no further risks in the future with any other foreigner.

THE MEERUT CONSPIRACY CASE

1. To M. K. Basu¹

22 March 1929

Dear Mr. Basu,²

I have your telegram. It is very difficult for me to take any effective steps from here. As a matter of fact the offences for which people have been arrested are non-bailable. Besides so many have been arrested that I do not see what arrangements could be made for bailing the lot of them. I think what is much more important is for some arrangements to be made for the preliminary stages of the investigation e.g. identification etc. Unfortunately I am not very much in touch with people in Meerut. Meerut lies in the Delhi Province so far as the Congress is concerned. I am writing to friends in Delhi and Meerut to do what they can but they are likely to be overwhelmed by the number of people requiring assistance. I think that it would be desirable for you to send someone to Meerut to find out what can be done and make necessary arrangements.

I am going to Calcutta day after tomorrow and shall spend the 25th and part of the 26th there. I shall be glad to see you. I hope to stay with Subhas Babu.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(ii)/1929 (Pt. II) 315, N.M.M.L.
2. Mrinal Kanti Basu (1886-1957); a journalist and trade union leader of Bengal; president of the Press Workers' Union 1922-48, All India Trade Union Federation 1923, Bengal Trade Union Congress 1932, National Trade Union Federation 1933-40 and All India Trade Union Congress 1946.

2. To R. Bridgeman¹

4 April 1929

My dear Bridgeman,

I owe you an apology for the delay in answering your cablegram. This was partly due to the fact that we were ourselves waiting for developments and partly to the fact that I was continuously travelling about. I have today sent a cable to Saklatvala giving him some particulars of the indictment. I have also sent you a short cable informing you that I have telegraphed to Saklatvala. It would have been an unnecessary expense for me to cable to you in full.

I am enclosing a copy of a letter I am sending to Saklatvala. This will put you in possession of the facts as we know them.

The President of the Assembly here has put the government in an awkward dilemma² and I do not know what will be the outcome of it. It may be that the Public Safety Bill will be postponed. I take it that the trial at Meerut will go on.

Your suggestion that we should appeal to the Trade Union Congress in England was forwarded by me to Joshi, the General Secretary of the All India Trade Union Congress. I recommended to him to take the step suggested by you. I do not know what he has done in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F. D. 23/1929-1930, p. 133, N.M.M.L.
2. Vithalbhai Patel refused to permit the Public Safety Bill to be introduced again in the Assembly after it had been earlier rejected and the Viceroy had no alternative but to issue an Ordinance.

3. To S. Srinivasa Iyengar¹

4 April 1929

My dear Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar,

I enclose copy of a letter I am sending to father. You are well conversant with the situation in England and I am sure any lead given by you will be appreciated by the people.

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

The other day I had a message from some of the undertrial prisoners in Meerut. They asked me to try my best to induce you to take up their defence. I promised to communicate their wish to you. I have seen in the papers that a kind of defence committee has been formed but I do not know anything about it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To B. N. Datta¹

Allahabad
4 April 1929

Dear Dr. Datta,

I am sorry for the delay in answering your letter of the 21st March but owing to my absence from Allahabad I only saw it yesterday. The question of the defence of the persons arrested in the Meerut case has already been discussed and I believe a defence committee has been chosen. I am told that it is possible to get a number of really competent lawyers to help us in an advisory capacity. But it is very difficult to get a competent man for the trial. It is likely to last months and months and may be a year. However such arrangements as can be made will be made.

The National Congress and the Trade Union Congress will probably not officially undertake the defence of the accused. This is too great a financial liability for any organisation to take up. It is also partly inexpedient for organisations to interfere in this way. The right thing to do is for Congressmen as well as Trade Union people to cooperate as an independent committee in the defence. The Trade Union Executive will be meeting soon in Bombay and will consider this.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J. N. Correspondence. N.M.M.L.

5. To Father¹

Allahabad

24.4.29

My dear Father,

... Nan tells me that you have asked Ranjit to go to Meerut. I have not met him yet and do not know the details. In Calcutta I discussed the Meerut case with various people. As I have already told you the Bengali prisoners in Meerut, had suggested Abbil Dutt.² I found however that everyone I consulted in Calcutta was against this suggestion. They said Abbil Dutt was not smart enough. Sudhir Ray³ suggested B. C. Chatterji⁴ or Nishit Sen.⁵ Both these gentlemen are expensive. Nishit Sen would want about Rs. 6000 a month and Chatterji a little more. Sen-Gupta recommended Nishit Sen strongly and as his junior A. C. Mukerji⁶. He thought that A. C. Mukerji could be put in charge of the preliminary enquiry and Nishit Sen to come in for the trial and also for consultation now.

Sarat Bose⁷ was strongly opposed to Nishit Sen. Not so much perhaps because of his competence but because he considered him thoroughly unreliable. He recommended A. C. Mukerji for the case — the man Sen-Gupta suggested for the inquiry. A.C. Mukerji would want I was told 3000/- p.m. but he might be beaten down to Rs. 2000/- p.m.

I do not know what arrangements you have in view but I am writing these details of conversations in Calcutta so that you might be kept informed. As a matter of fact the Bombay labour people are likely to supply most of the funds and their views will carry more weight than those of the Calcutta people.

1. M.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. An advocate of Calcutta.
3. A barrister of Calcutta.
4. A barrister specialising on the criminal side in Bengal.
5. An eminent criminal lawyer of Calcutta.
6. A pleader in police courts who subsequently became a barrister.
7. Sarat Chandra Bose (1889-1950); elder brother of Subhas Bose and a leading barrister of Calcutta; detained during the civil disobedience movement (February 1932-July 1935) and again during the Second World War (December 1941-September 1945); for sometime President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and member of the Congress Working Committee; leader of the Opposition in the Bengal Assembly 1937-1945; elected to the Central Assembly in 1946; member of the Interim National Government of India, September-November 1946.

I understand that you have asked for Ramji Gurtu⁸ also. I do not know if it will be worthwhile sending for many juniors from outside specially if you have to pay them. If juniors have to be sent for would it not be better to get men like the one from Bihar who has offered his services for a small allowance to maintain his family?

Your loving son,
Jawahar

8. Ram Narain Gurtu, a barrister of Allahabad; judge of the Allahabad High Court; at present adviser, Anand Bhawan, Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund.

6. To R. Bridgeman¹

25 April 1929

My dear Bridgeman,

A few days ago I received your cable referring to an air mail enquiry dated March 28th which you had apparently sent us. No such communication has been received by us. I can only presume that it has been suppressed by the authorities. I am therefore in the dark as to what this enquiry was about. I have already sent Saklatvala by post a copy of the indictment in the case and have supplemented this with such other facts as we had in our possession. If there is anything more that you want to know I shall gladly supply the information. The procedure in such cases is that a preliminary magisterial enquiry is held and if a *prima facie* case is established the people concerned are committed to the sessions where their proper trial takes place. So far not even the preliminary enquiry has begun although it is now over a month since the arrests took place. Every two weeks the police take a fresh remand on the ground that they have got hold of such a mass of papers that they want time to go through them. It is a curious reason and it leads one to think that the original evidence in the possession of the police was extraordinarily feeble and they are now trying to supplement it by searches on houses. Even so a month has not sufficed to prepare them for the enquiry.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F. D. 23/1929-1930, pp. 120-23, N.M.M.L.

The magistrate who has so far remanded the case has given expression to some extraordinary opinions and sentiments. He has so far not taken the trouble to inform anyone, either the prisoners or their counsel, that the police are going to move for a remand. He has simply walked into the jail in the early hours of the morning and given a further remand to the police. Some bail applications had been presented to him. That he has rejected them is not very surprising but his principal reason for doing so is really remarkable. In adopting the police argument he says that the mere fact that such a prosecution has been launched by the Government of India shows that the accused are in all likelihood guilty. You can imagine what one can expect from a trial presided over by a magistrate of this kind. I believe an application has been made to the Viceroy on behalf of the accused to transfer the case to one of the High Courts, either Calcutta or Bombay. I notice that Saklatvala has been putting some questions on this subject in the House. There is little likelihood of the transfer taking place. Under the law European British subjects have a right to demand a trial by jury which Indians cannot demand. Bradley² and Spratt³ therefore have this right and they may exercise it.

As you must have seen from the copy of the indictment, the League against Imperialism has been made a special target by the authorities here. I trust therefore that the League and its associate bodies will help us not only financially for the defence but chiefly in mobilising support elsewhere. The matter is however an even bigger one and concerns not merely the left wing organisations but all labour organisations. I hope therefore that you will be able as you say in your cable to get British Labour to support Indian labour at this crisis. The Meerut trial taken together with the Trades Disputes Act and the Public Safety Ordinance passed by the Viceroy over the head of the President of the Assembly all indicate an attack on trade union organisations and labour. If these attacks are allowed to pass unchallenged there will be little of labour organisation left in India.

I have not been able to adopt your suggestion to appeal directly to the British Trade Union Congress. I suggested it to Joshi, Secretary of the All India T.U.C. But Joshi hesitated and wanted us to wait till our Executive Council considered the matter. The Executive Council is meeting day after tomorrow in Bombay.

2. Benjamin Bradley, a British communist who arrived in India in September 1927.
3. Philip Spratt, a British communist who arrived in India in December 1926 and was in jail with a short interruption from 1929 to 1936; in later years he moved away from communism.

A defence committee for the Meerut accused has been formed. This committee consists of some leading members of the National Congress like my father, Srinivasa Iyengar, Ansari and others. They have appealed for funds but the response so far has been poor. Other local defence committees for raising funds have also been formed, specially in Bombay.

During the last fortnight I have been very much troubled by my sister's and wife's illness. They both managed to fall ill together and both were suspected of having appendicitis. Fortunately they are better now.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. To Father¹

Allahabad
1 May 1929

My dear Father,

As you have written to Ranjit, there seems to be a hopeless muddle about this case. People come and go, make statements, give interviews, issue manifestoes and nobody seems to be any the better for their activities. From time to time the press correspondents at Meerut issue foolish accounts of what is happening or not happening and this makes the confusion worse confounded. Many people may be to blame for this but I do think that the Central Defence Committee must shoulder its share of the blame. It has so far given no lead in the matter. Practically all that has been done is the appeal for funds in the press.

The committee has various difficulties to face—lack of funds etc. But whatever these may be some decision should be arrived at for the preliminary stages at any rate. This decision may be varied later on but it will at any rate serve the useful purpose of lessening the element of irresponsibility. Few people know the names of the members of the Central Committee, and I do not think anybody has been appointed its secretary yet.

I have already written to you what people in Calcutta said. They suggested three names: B. C. Chatterji at about 6000/- a month; Nishit Sen at about 4000/- or so; and a junior criminal lawyer A. C.

1. M.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

Mukerji at 3000/- or may be 2000/- per month. Most people recommended Nishit Sen but Sarat Bose was strongly opposed to him. A. C. Mukerji was recommended by several but it was suggested that he should have a senior specially at the trial. For the preliminary enquiry he might be good enough.

In Bombay no special names were mentioned to me. Deshmukh, a fairly senior barrister of Nagpur, the brother of the Bombay surgeon, has been asked by some people if he will consent to go but his answer had not been received. It was presumed by some that he might agree to take up the case without any fees or for nominal fees.

Nariman is involved in so many things that it is not possible for him to leave Bombay for several months. He was prepared however to go occasionally for a week or so. Probably he has gone to Meerut for the next remand proceedings.

One or two other names were mentioned rather vaguely but no one had much of a notion as who might be able to go. It may not be difficult to get one or two juniors from the C. P. without much of a fee. Jinnah I believe was also asked but he told them that he would be too expensive for them.

You will thus see that everything is undecided and nobody knows what to do. If the Central Committee appoints any fairly competent person or persons they will be acceptable to most. Some people may try to supplement them by additional lawyers but that will not matter much.

Much depends on finances. So far as your committee is concerned you might be able to raise a few thousands by personal appeals. A general appeal does not help much. At Delhi I understand that certain promises were made on behalf of various provinces. Satyen Mitra² I am told said that Bengal would give at least Rs. 10000/-; and Satyapal³ promised to raise 5000/- in the Punjab. I doubt very much if you will get so much from Bengal now that the general elections are on. As for the Punjab we need not expect much in spite of Satyapal's word. So far about 3000/- have been collected in Bengal but these are almost

2. Satyendra Chandra Mitra (1888-1942); vakil, Calcutta High Court; Secretary, Bengal Provincial Swaraj Party 1924; member A.I.C.C. 1920-27; member Bengal Legislative Council 1923-26; elected to Central Assembly 1926; President of Bengal Legislative Council, 1937.
3. A prominent Congressman of Punjab; played a leading part in the Rowlatt Act agitation; was deported from Amritsar in 1919 with Kitchlew; suffered imprisonment several times; President, Punjab P.C.C. for many years; Speaker of the Punjab Assembly in 1952; died 1954.

solely for Kishorilal Ghose. In Bombay there are various funds and several defence committees.

There is the defence committee of the Gimi Kamgar Union. This had already collected about Rs. 8000 and hoped to collect a larger sum. But the union is involved in a general strike and so long as this strike lasts obviously no further collections can be made. There is no immediate probability of the strike ending.

Then there are separate collections by the railway unions. I do not know how much has been collected, probably about 2000 or 3000. This is divided into three parts : a general fund for all the accused, a fund for the three or four railway people involved, and a fund for Jhabvala alone. Jhabvala's friends have taken care to see that the last fund is the biggest, much to the annoyance of the others concerned.

There is another defence committee in Bombay with a large and representative membership. Collections are chiefly made by the members of the Youth League for this. They have so far collected about 900 and they hope to collect about 3000.

I have been receiving odd sums from time to time for the defence. Altogether I have received about Rs. 100.

The financial prospects are thus not bright unless the general strike in Bombay ends soon. When I visited the accused in jail, Bradley and Spratt suggested that we should appeal to foreign organisations for help. I have made no such direct appeal but in my letters to some organisations I have mentioned that we are collecting funds for the defence.

In regard to the engagement of lawyers there is of course a general desire that competent men should be engaged. At the same time it is obvious that we cannot pay heavy or even moderately heavy fees. The case will last at least a year and may be more. It is also felt that even apart from our inability to pay heavy fees, it is undesirable to do so. It does seem all wrong for door to door collections to be made and the annas and pias of the poorest to be gathered to pay substantial sums to a few lawyers. *The Times of India*⁴ had a gibe about the Meerut case proving a godsend to 'patriotic' lawyers.

Personally I feel that the maximum sum that should be spent in the preliminary enquiry is Rs. 2000/- a month and in the trial Rs. 3000/- a month. Even this may mean Rs. 40000/- or more in all.

Girdharilal happened to be in Bombay a few days ago just before I went. He took the people there to task for not having sent-on their collections to the central committee. I believe he gave them the

4. 27 April 1929.

impression that he was the secretary of the committee. He may not have said this though. I should like to know if he is the secretary or if somebody else has been chosen. The people in Bombay told him rightly enough that they had no definite knowledge of the central committee except what they had seen in the papers. They did not know the names of the members, the name of the secretary, the address of the office. No official communication had been sent to them and it did not appear what the committee was doing. They had no objection to sending their collections to this committee if work was started.

I have told the Girni Kamgar people, who possess most of the funds, that obviously they will have to part with the money if they want to help the central committee to do something. They were quite agreeable to do so but their fear was that all their money might be swallowed up very soon without anyone else contributing substantially to the defence. I suggested to them that they might contribute a sum monthly, say 1000 or so and keep remaining funds themselves. I do not think there will be much difficulty about coming to some arrangement.

I have had a letter from Govind Ballabh Pant saying that it will not be possible for him to do much in the case. He is still a victim of lumbago and there is the possibility of the general election in the U. P. Mahmud writes to me offering his services for the case. It is not clear whether he is prepared to work entirely without fees. I have now placed the whole position before you. I think the central committee must immediately take some action. It must appoint a secretary if it has not already done so. It must have an office or at least an address. And it must take charge of the work at Meerut.

As I told you after my return from Meerut we had fixed up the appointment of two wholetime junior lawyers in Meerut at 200/- and 100/- a month. Also a clerk and a typist at 100/- and had further sanctioned 100/- for copies and miscellaneous expenses. I had requested you to have 500/- sent immediately to Meerut. I do not know if this was done but from a letter I have received from Meerut it appears that the money was not received by them. If so of course they could not start doing anything on business lines.

The Bombay people are waiting to hear from me. If you could kindly let me know what you propose doing I shall write to them immediately.

Your loving son,
Jawahar

I am sending a copy of this letter to Ansari.

8. Cable To R. Bridgeman¹

Owing to correspondence being suppressed and delayed it is difficult to keep in touch with you. The Meerut trial, the Trades Disputes Act, the Public Safety Ordinance, are a direct attack on the labour and trade union organisations.

If allowed to pass unchallenged the trade union movement must be grievously crippled. Trust British Labour will support Indian labour and help in fighting these retrograde legislation and in defending the Meerut accused.

There is no progress in the Meerut case as yet. The prosecution is taking remand after remand without disclosing the case against the accused. Remands given without previous notice to the accused or their counsel. All bail applications rejected. Chief reason given by magistrate being that the mere fact that the Government of India has started the prosecution shows that there must be strong proof of guilt against the accused.

A Defence Committee, consisting of Dr. Ansari (Chairman), Pandit Motilal Nehru, Srinivasa Iyengar and others, has issued an appeal for funds for the defence.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F. D. 23/1929, p. 125, N.M.M.L. The cable was published, in part, in the *Daily Herald*, 7 May 1929.

9. To R. Bridgeman¹

7 May 1929

My dear Bridgeman,

You will no doubt have seen from the papers that arrests and house searches continue in India. They began ostensibly to combat communism and communists. As a matter of fact many people who are arrested are well known not to be communists and even most of the so-called communists are communists in theory only. Practically every

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 23/1929-1930, p. 119, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

one belonging to the left wing of labour is dubbed a communist. Now however they have gone a step further and nationalists of note are being arrested as such.

We are having a general strike in Bombay.² The strike itself is an extraordinary example of solidarity. As happened last year there is some danger of communal troubles developing in Bombay. The real issue of course has nothing to do with religion or communal strife. But it is so easy for those who are interested to do so to develop communal passions. In the present strike one of the main issues is the reinstatement of 6000 union workers in place of non-union men engaged. As it happens nearly all the union workers kept out are Hindus and the non-union men engaged in their place are Mohamadans. Some time ago there was a strike in one of the mills on the ground of victimisation of the union committee in the mill. The mill owners engaged non-union men to take the place of the strikers. Now there is a general strike in support of these union members displaced as well as in protest against the victimisation of union officials. The question is a purely economic one but the mere fact that most of the non-union men engaged are Mohamadans gives people a handle to raise the Hindu-Muslim issue. . .

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. 67 cotton mills in Bombay closed down on 26 April 1929 following a general strike by the 'Red Flag' Textile Workers' Union. Over 1,50,000 workers were affected.

10. To R. Bridgeman¹

20 May 1929

My dear Bridgeman,

I have your letter enclosing copy of a resolution passed at the Trafalgar Square meeting. I note your telegraphic address.

I have also received the cable you sent me informing me that you had circulated my cable to the T.U.C. and labour organisations.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 23/1929-1930, p. 111, N.M.M.L.

We are having a number of police round ups and arrests all over the country. Either the police have completely lost their heads or a deliberate attempt is being made to show that vast conspiracies are afoot. Every day papers state that so-called red letters are sent to various people. It seems to me inconceivable that any sane person or even any practical revolutionary would go about distributing such letters broadcast. There is a general impression that most of these letters are the productions of proteges of the criminal intelligence department.

I have been greatly worried for many weeks past owing to my wife's and sister's illness. My sister was operated upon for appendicitis last week and it is probable that my wife will also have to undergo an operation.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. Statement on Meerut Prisoners¹

I noticed the other day that the authorities concerned have refused to give any special facilities in regard to diet or other jail conditions to the Meerut accused with the exception of Messrs. Bradley and Spratt who are classed as Europeans. I do not suppose those accused care very much for the comforts and luxuries of life and certainly none of them is prepared to ask favours from the government.

But the question is a larger one. Here are these people arrested and kept for months in jail even before the preliminary enquiry commences. Bail is not accepted. And yet the most ordinary amenities are denied to them and they have to live almost as condemned prisoners. To be an Indian prisoner at any time is not a pleasant experience; in the height of summer in the U.P. it often becomes unbearable. For those in solitary cells it is hell. The government grudges a few annas a day to a prisoner but it pays enormous fees to lawyers and their numerous retinue. I do hope the lesson will not be lost on the people and they will help in the defence of the Meerut accused.

1. Allahabad, 22 May 1929. *The Tribune*, 24 May 1929.

12. To R. Bridgeman¹

10 June 1929

My dear Bridgeman,

... The preliminary enquiry in Meerut is likely to commence in two or three days' time. I am going there tomorrow to be present at the beginning at least. The defence committee has made some arrangements for defence during this enquiry. So far of course we do not know what the case for the government is except very vaguely and generally. For nearly three months the accused have been kept in jail under very trying circumstances during the hottest part of the year and not even the enquiry has begun. The reason given is that there was such a mass of papers to go through that the prosecution could not get ready in time. The fact that the prosecution chose its own time for the arrests and had full opportunity of preparing the case before arresting people right and left does not seem to carry much weight.

We have not been able to collect enough funds for defence so far. The only people who might have helped much are the trade unionists specially in Bombay. But these people also are in the middle of a strike and are consequently incapable of helping.

In case I wire to the British Trade Union Council I shall also send you a cable.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 23/1929-30, pp. 101-103, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

13. To V. Chattopadhyaya¹

20 June 1929

My dear Chatto,

Your letter dated May 29th. I have just returned to Allahabad after a fairly lengthy absence. This was largely due to my presence in Calcutta

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 1/1929-1930, pp. 61-67, N.M.M.L.

to look after my wife who was in hospital. She is having a bad time and her stay in Calcutta has not done her much good. Krishna is very much better after her operation.

The name of the T.U.C. delegate which you could not read was I think Purandare². I do not know him personally but I believe he is a fairly energetic trade union worker. I do not know if he has been able to go to Europe.

I am not surprised at the activities of Shiva Rao³ & Co. They are sure to do their utmost to drag the A.I.T.U.C. in the wake of Amsterdam. Probably they are full of the Labour Government in England at present and are having frequent interviews with Graham Pole & Co. It is obvious however that they have no authority to negotiate for the affiliation of the A.I.T.U.C. with Amsterdam. It all depends on the composition of the T.U.C. this year when the question is bound to come up for decision. Owing to the arrests of large numbers of left wingers there is a probability of the moderate section having a majority. The moderates of course seldom get arrested except by mistake. It is also probable that an attempt will be made to annul the affiliation of the T.U.C. to the League. Certainly as you say it is desirable to give correct information about the League to various unions. But I do not think even this will make very much difference. Those who are afraid of government action will continue to oppose affiliation in spite of all the information that you might give. It is clear that the government is making a dead set against the League. A deal of prominence has been given and will continue to be given to the League in the Meerut trial. This is enough to frighten away all the timid folk in the T.U.C.

It would be a good thing if you could send me suitable material containing full facts and information about the League and its activities. I could give publicity to it both from the point of view of the Meerut trial and the T.U.C.

The Meerut case has begun. So far we only had two days of oratory from Langford James,⁴ the senior counsel of the prosecution. After he has finished his opening address he will lead some evidence. The defence will not cross-examine at this stage. They have only to see that irrelevant matter is not brought in. After the conclusion of the preliminary enquiry which is likely to take three months or more the accused will be committed to sessions where the formal trial will begin.

2. V.B. Purandare, General Secretary of the G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union 1930.

3. B. Shiva Rao (b. 1891); delegate to I.L.O. Conference, Geneva 1929-30; delegate to the Round Table Conference 1930-31; member of the delegation to the U.N. General Assembly 1947-50, 1952; member of the Constituent Assembly 1946-50; member of Lok Sabha 1952-57; member of Rajya Sabha 1957-60.

4. A senior barrister of Calcutta.

You will read Langford James' address in the Indian papers. It is a pure propaganda effort and the obvious attempt is made to prejudice the Meerut accused in the eyes of the nationalists. This attempt will partly succeed because many of the friends of the accused have a way of cursing nationalists in the most offensive language. This has already resulted in many people who had promised to contribute towards the funds of the defence refusing to do so.

You will see that an addition has been made to the Meerut accused. Hutchinson⁵ was arrested a few days ago and taken to Meerut. Probably one or two others will also be arrested. I do not personally know Hutchinson very well. I only met him slightly once or twice in Bombay.

In spite of the great resources of government and the time they have had to prepare their case it is obvious that they are not yet quite ready to begin. They started on the 12th June and on the 13th the case was adjourned for 10 days, the plea being the *Mohurram* holidays. This was only a dodge to get the benefit of another remand without having to ask for it.

The whole case is being run on propaganda basis by the government. The official Director of Publicity R. S. Bajpai has actually been sent down from Simla to Meerut to supervise publicity arrangements. I am told also that government is defraying the expenses of sending full reports through the Associated Press. You will see from Langford James' preliminary address that he has been trying to understand without great success what communism and the various Internationals are. Unfortunately there are not many people who know much of these subjects here.

I have read with interest a copy of the letter of Sailendra Nath Ghose⁶ and Bajpai⁷ to you. I had not seen it previously but I suspected as much from some other letters that I have received from them. Little importance need be attached to them. They will be suitably dealt with.

As I wrote to you it was my intention to cable and write fully directly to the British T.U.C. regarding the Meerut trial. But before doing so I wanted to have copies of the correspondence on the subject between the Indian T.U.C. office and the British T.U.C. Bakhale however has not sent these yet to me. I am telegraphing to him and I hope to be able to send an air mail letter to the British T.U.C. soon.

Regarding the detailed information that you require about the Meerut case I am afraid it is very difficult for me to send you all the details you

5. Lester Hutchinson; in India 1928-33; M.P. 1945-50; author of *Conspiracy at Meerut*.

6. President of the branch of the Indian National Congress in New York in 1929.

7. Ram Lal B. Bajpai was the secretary of the branch of the Indian National Congress in New York in 1929.

require weekly. We are trying to arrange however to issue necessary information from Meerut regularly. I am sending your request to the people there and asking them to communicate with you weekly if possible. So far there are no documents in the case except the indictment a copy of which I have already sent you. As for other copies it is an expensive job getting numerous copies. I shall try however to arrange to have copies of important papers sent to you.

The treatment of prisoners is a little better now. They are all kept together in a big barrack. Of course Meerut in the hot weather is an extraordinarily disagreeable place and the accused get the full benefit of the heat in the jail.

About the life and work of the accused I shall also ask the Meerut people to send you such details as they can get. You are not likely to get photographs of many of them.

The arrangements made for the defence so far are as follows:

There is a central defence committee consisting of Dr. Ansari as Chairman and Girdhari Lal as secretary. Other members are my father, Raghubir Narain Singh and Jyoti Prasad⁸ of Meerut, N. C. Kelkar, K. F. Nariman, V. H. Joshi⁹ and myself. Nariman and Joshi are the representatives of the two Bombay defence committees. There are also local committees in Calcutta and elsewhere. As I have mentioned above the defence has not got to do much during the preliminary enquiry. So far the following counsels have been engaged for this enquiry:—

Deoki Prasad Singh, Chagla,¹⁰ Chakravarty,¹¹ F. Ansari,¹² and Gupta¹³ of Lucknow. Chakravarty has been deputed by the Bengal Committee.

8. Jyoti Prasad Gupta (1887-1966); a prominent Congress leader of Meerut; elected in 1952 to U. P. Legislative Council.
9. Vasudev Hari Joshi, a communist of Maharashtra; was sentenced to six months' imprisonment in the Mulshipetha Satyagraha campaign in 1923. During the Meerut Conspiracy Case he tried to go to Moscow to enlist support, but was arrested in Bombay.
10. M.C. Chagla (b. 1900); a barrister of Bombay; Judge of Bombay High Court 1941-47 and Chief Justice 1947-58; Judge, International Court of Justice, 1957; member, Law Commission, 1955-58; Ambassador to U.S. 1958-61; High Commissioner to U.K. 1962-63; Minister of Education, Government of India, 1963-66; Minister for External Affairs 1966-67; leader of the Indian delegation to U.N. Security Council during debates on Kashmir question 1964 and 1965.
11. Khitish Chandra Chakravarty was an advocate of the Calcutta High Court.
12. Faridul Haq Ansari, a barrister of Delhi; prominent member of the Congress Socialist Party; member of Rajya Sabha 1957-62.
13. Chandra Bhanu Gupta (b. 1902); advocate and Congressman of Lucknow; member A.I.C.C. 1926-59; member U.P. P.C.C. from 1933 onwards and treasurer 1946-58; Parliamentary Secretary to the Chief Minister, 1946-47; Minister 1947-57; Chief Minister, U.P. 1960-63, March-April 1967 and 1969-70.

A few of the accused, mostly the Punjab ones, have stated that they do not desire to defend themselves. The others have been divided up amongst the counsel named above. Jhabvala has not associated himself with the common defence. I believe he has engaged Chamanlal to defend him. About Chamanlal I might add that he did not withdraw from the defence as you have stated. As a matter of fact most of the accused refused to have him.

It is proposed to have one senior man at least for the trial.

You will no doubt notice that a growing number of people are being arrested for sedition and similar offences here. It is not an easy matter to defend these people in the courts of law. Besides so far as sedition is concerned it is the position of the Congress that it is our bounden duty to be seditious to the British Government. The question of defence hardly arises. It has therefore been the policy of the Congress not to defend such cases and the A.I.C.C. has not given any money for such a defence in the past. As a very special case and for the first time the Working Committee has sanctioned a grant of Rs. 1500 for the Meerut defence.

I enclose copy of a letter I am sending to the American Branch.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

14. To R. Bridgeman¹

22/6/29

My dear Bridgeman,

I enclose a copy of a letter I am sending Citrine² today by air mail. Also a copy of a cablegram I am sending him.

So far as the Meerut trial is concerned I think the greatest stress should be laid on the manoeuvre by which government has deprived most of the accused of a jury trial to which they were entitled. There may be a feeling that now that proceedings have commenced in Meerut it is too late to intervene or get a transfer. This is a wrong notion. Only

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 23/1929-1930, pp. 95, N.M.M.L.

2. Walter, later Lord Citrine, (b. 1887); British trade union leader; General Secretary of Trade Union Congress 1926-46; president of the International Federation of Trade Unions 1928-1945.

a preliminary magisterial enquiry has begun. This itself may last four months or six months—we do such things in a leisurely manner here—and then there will be a commitment for the trial. The enquiry and the trial might well take a year and a half.

You must have read about Hutchinson's arrest. He has been added to the Meerut crowd.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

15. To Walter Citrine¹

Allahabad,
June 22nd, 1929

Dear Mr. Citrine,

I have no doubt that you have been following recent events in India with considerable interest. The Trades Disputes Act, the Public Safety Ordinance made the law of the land by executive fiat, the Meerut trial and the daily arrests and house searches that are going on in India, have kept us fairly busy in this country. You have already been kept informed of many of these developments by the office of the All India Trade Union Congress. I am writing as President of the A.I.T.U.C. to supplement the information that has already been sent to you and to request your General Council to take some action in the matter.

I do not propose to write at length on the general situation in India. For the moment I shall confine myself to the Meerut trial. I would like to point out however that this trial cannot be isolated from the general situation and must be treated as one phase of the offensive which the government here has started against the labour movement. This fact is well recognised in India and the Executive Council of our Trade Union Congress has laid stress on it in their resolution on the subject. Even the Indian National Congress, which is not directly or solely concerned with labour, has been constrained to admit this.

You know well what the lot of industrial workers is in India. Your own fraternal delegates to the A.I.T.U.C.² have raised the curtain from the hell, that is industrial India, in many places. With the growth of

1. Maharashtra Government Records/Bombay Police Commissioner's File No. 1291/B/I.

2. At the All India Trade Union Congress held in Jharia on 18 December 1928 Ryan and Johnston were among the fraternal delegates.

the trade union movement in India the workers have gradually become conscious of their own exceeding misery and degradation and with this consciousness has come bitterness and the spirit of revolt. The continual industrial conflicts that are going on, the strike and the lockouts are evidence of this spirit of revolt. Some of these strikes may be hastily and unwisely begun but their very unwisdom is often a measure of the desperation of the workers. .

Such has lately been the general outlook of the worker in India. He has also observed how at every stage and in every conflict between worker and employer, the whole weight of the executive government is cast on the side of the employer. At the least provocation the police and even the military thunder up to overawe the worker and not unoften fire on him with effect. And so there is not much love lost between the worker and the government and daily the bitterness of the worker, both against his employer and the government, has increased. Obviously this was not to the liking of the government. It was bad enough for them to have to deal with an aggressive nationalist movement. It was far worse to have the organised workers grow more and more militant from day to day. They had to be broken, and all the power and resources of government were utilised to this purpose.

It is easy enough to understand the events of the last year in India if looked at with this background. The repressive legislation, the arrests and trials, and the attitude of government during strikes and lockouts all hang together and point to the one conclusion that the government is out to break the back of the trade unions and organised labour in India.

There is a lot of shouting about communists and communism in India. Undoubtedly there are some communists in India but it is equally certain that this cry of communism is meant to cover a multitude of sins of the government. Of the 31 accused in the Meerut case, now 32 since Hutchinson's arrest, the majority know little about communism. People connected with any kind of labour or peasant activity have been arrested and are being tried. Eight of those included in the Meerut case are members of the All India Congress Committee³—the Central Executive Committee of the National Congress. It is patently absurd to say that the government is confining its attention to communists.

Of course even so far as the communists are concerned the question arises how far the government is dealing fairly with them in the trial:

3. Dr. Biswanath Mukherji, Kedar Nath Saigal, Sohan Singh Josh, Muzaffar Ahmad, K.N. Joglekar, R.S. Nimbkar, S.A. Dange, and D.R. Thengdi.

how far they are given a decent chance to put up a defence. Most of the accused were arrested in Bengal or Bombay. In the ordinary course of affairs they would have had the benefit of a jury trial in their own presidencies. But, not without a full realisation of the consequences, it was decided by government to have the trial in Meerut. Automatically the accused lost their valued right of trial by jury. And the choice of place was such that the defence had to face every conceivable difficulty. Attempts made to induce the Viceroy to change the venue of the trial have ended in failure.

The Meerut arrests took place on or about March 20th. In the ordinary course a preliminary magisterial enquiry should have been held soon to decide if there was a *prima facie* case for the Sessions. Instead of this, remand after remand was taken by the prosecution on the plea of not being ready to proceed with the case. They chose the time of arrest. No one else forced them to do so on that date and yet month after month remands were taken. If the accused had been let out on bail this might not have mattered but bail was refused in every instance, and the amazing argument was advanced by the magistrate that as the Government of India had started the case there must be something in it which will probably justify conviction. This, at the commencement of the case when not a scrap of evidence had been produced.

All this took place in the hottest part of the year when the northern India plains have a temperature in the shade of about 116 °F. In jail you can imagine what the conditions must have been. As a matter of fact cholera broke out in the jail and the accused had suddenly to be sent elsewhere for a few weeks. They returned to Meerut later.

Repeated remands taken by the prosecution became so outrageous that there was a public outcry against them. So ultimately the prosecution said they would start the case on the 12th June. They did so. On the 13th however the case was adjourned for ten days partly because of some Muslim holidays which need not have interfered with the case and partly to suit the convenience of the prosecution again. So that in effect the prosecution got in another remand.

The two days' proceedings were however very instructive. The counsel for the prosecution held forth as if he was addressing a Hyde Park meeting and the Government of India sent down their head publicity officer from Simla to Meerut simply to organise propaganda. So that this highly paid officer whose chief job is to collect important statistics and prepare the annual report on India for Parliament is now engaged in Meerut in doing obvious propaganda work for the prosecution. He is utilizing the public press agency to send the messages he wants to the papers in India and England. The cost of these messages is going

to be paid by the government. These facts make it clear enough what the Meerut trial is meant to achieve. You will probably see reports of the trial in the newspapers in England. These reports are in all likelihood coming through the tainted source I have mentioned above.

The fact that the Meerut trial has a deeper significance than is made out by government is obvious enough and has been appreciated by most people here. The Indian National Congress which is very far indeed from being communistically inclined is helping in the defence. The All India Trade Union Congress has expressed itself strongly in the matter, and prominent lawyers and others who have nothing to do with communism or socialism or even labour have associated themselves with the defence.

Under these circumstances I hope your General Council will appreciate the importance of the issues involved and will express itself unequivocally on the subject. The real issue is the breaking of the trade union movement in India. We are quite sure that your council cannot view the possibility of any injury being done to this infant movement in India with equanimity and that you will do your utmost to help us at this stage. We would like you to expose and oppose the whole policy underlying the recent labour legislation of the Government of India and the Meerut trial. In particular we would request you to insist on the trial being held, if at all, in a place where the accused are not deprived of their right of a jury trial. This seems to us such an obvious and elementary right that the government's action in avoiding a jury trial seems extraordinary. Even in ordinary cases this would be bad enough. In a case of this magnitude with the possibility of the severest penalties the prevention of a jury trial is little short of scandalous. And it should be remembered that the great majority of the accused come from places where they were sure to have a jury trial.

I am sending you separately some copies of the "Congress Bulletin" which gives the names and other particulars of the Meerut accused. Please refer to pages 74-77, 86 and 104.

I am afraid I have written to you at great length. But I feel that I would not do justice to the great issues involved in the government policy in India nor would I be fair to your General Council if I wrote briefly and just asked for your sympathy and help. We want the help and sympathy of British labour; we want your council's help and sympathy to fight the attacks being made on organised labour in India, to defend the Meerut accused and to build up a strong trade union movement in India. But we want this help and sympathy to be based on a cool appreciation of the issues involved. I have therefore written at some length.

I shall very gladly supply you with any other information that you may require.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

16. To R. Bridgeman¹

1 July 1929

My dear Bridgeman,

Thank you for your letter of the 10th June enclosing a copy of your letter to Citrine.

I am full of admiration for the sweetly reasonable letters that you are writing to Citrine in spite of his offensive replies. You are obviously a diplomat. I must say that I was annoyed to read Citrine's reply to your letter. When writing to him however last week I tried to keep my temper in hand. I hope I succeeded. If Citrine continues the offensive I am afraid my patience will be exhausted.

I am very thankful to you for all the trouble you are taking in spite of the difficulties you have to face.

The Meerut case has been postponed after another two days of oratory on the part of the Public Prosecutor. I am trying to send you by this week if possible a full report officially supplied of the opening address of Langford James on behalf of the prosecution. You will find this interesting reading.

In a day or two an application is going to be made in the High Court here for a transfer of the case to enable a jury trial to take place.

It seems to me obvious that Ramsay MacDonald or Wedgwood Benn² are going to do nothing of importance in regard to India. Personally I am not very sorry because I do not think the time has arrived for peace. I am afraid whether we want it or not there will be trouble and much suffering before there is talk of peace. That seems to be the inevitable course of the events everywhere.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 23/1929-1930, pp. 85-87, N.M.M.L.

2. Wedgwood Benn, first Viscount Stansgate (1877-1969); joined Labour party in 1927; Secretary of State for India 1929-31; Secretary of State for Air 1945-46.

I wonder if you could supply me with information regarding the Workers' Welfare League in London and the Labour Research Department of London.³ Both these are figuring prominently in the Meerut case and are stated to be pure communist organisations. So far as I know this is an entirely incorrect description although undoubtedly both belong to the left wing of labour. I believe that the Research Department was founded by very sober trade unions and Fabians and that the Trade Union Congress has supported it in the past. If I could have some information on this subject which could be utilised in the court here it might be useful. Annual reports of these organisations or references to them in other printed proceedings might help. I have made this request to the London branch of the National Congress also. I am repeating it to you to ensure that something comes to me soon.

In this connection you will see from Langford James' address that the League against Imperialism is specially selected for attack. You know well that the League, although it has had and has communists in it, is not a pure communist venture and is certainly not at the dictation of the Comintern. Any suggestions that you might possibly send to me in regard to this that might help in the Meerut case would be welcome.

With all good wishes,

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Saklatvala was one of the founders of the Workers' Welfare League of India in London. The prosecution alleged that Philip Spratt was sent to India on behalf of the Labour Research Department of London to organise the communist party in India.

17. To R. Bridgeman¹

11 July 1929

My dear Bridgeman,

... An application for a transfer of the Meerut case from Meerut to Allahabad was made in the High Court here today. The application was necessarily limited in scope because the High Court here could not

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 23/1929-1930, pp. 65-67, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

entertain any other application. A transfer to Allahabad was asked for together with a jury trial. The application has not been finally disposed of yet. But it is clear what the order is going to be. The High Court will not order a transfer of the case at this stage at any rate. As regards the jury trial they say the question should be raised after the commitment proceedings are over.

This application here does not take away any rights of any of the accused so that if it is considered advisable applications may be made at a later stage either in Calcutta or Bombay or in the King's Bench in London. . .

I have received your cablegram suggesting that we should authorise the London branch of the Congress to send six selected supplementary delegates on our behalf and that we should meet their extra expenses which may amount to about £ 100. . .

Regarding expenses I am afraid it is difficult for us at this stage to be generous and knowing my colleagues in the Congress Working Committee as I do I am certain they will not like to pay any large sum. This is not because of any want of sympathy for your proposal but because we really have to be careful of our funds. We have got a difficult situation to cope with here in India in the near future.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

18. To R. Bridgeman¹

Allahabad
11 July 1929

Dear Sir,

I have learnt with pleasure of the formation of a representative committee to work for the release of the Meerut prisoners and to press for full trade union and political rights for the Indian working class organisations. Your committee will not only have the cooperation of the central defence committee for the Meerut prisoners here but also I hope of the trade unions in India.

It is announced in the public press that the new Labour Government in England is going to repeal or amend the recent legislation affecting

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 23/1929-1930, p. 69, N.M.M.L.

trade unions in England². May I point out to you that similar legislation has been passed in India also in spite of the opposition of the trade union movement here. I trust therefore that your committee will work for the repeal of this Indian legislation also, in particular of the Trades Disputes Act and the Public Safety Ordinance.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. The Labour Government planned to repeal or amend the Trade Disputes and Trade Union Act 1927 which declared that strikes intended to coerce government were illegal but was unable to do so.

19. To S. Srinivasa Iyengar¹

Camp Calcutta
20 August 1929

Dear Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar,

I have just seen a press report that at a meeting of the Tamil Nad P.C.C. you made the following observations in the course of a speech:-

"It was for the same reason that although I was not a communist I was ready to take up the defence of the Meerut prisoners. But owing to the insolent behaviour of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru who said that I must formally write to the defence committee offering my services I was obliged to have nothing to do with it. He is a fool. I am not going to pay any heed to such fools. I had never cared for such fools in my life. I am not going to care for them in the future."

I do not know if this is a correct report. The extract has been translated from a Tamil paper and it is possible that errors have crept in both in the reporting and the translation. In view of the fact however that such a report has appeared I owe it to you and to myself to write to you and inform you that you are labouring under a total misapprehension so far as the Meerut defence committee is concerned.

Being an interested party I am obviously not in a position to judge the extent of my own folly. Probably you are a better judge and if after some experience of me you have arrived at a certain conclusion it is not for me to challenge it. But I am concerned to find you referring to something that I had said or done regarding your desire to take up the defence of the Meerut prisoners. I do not know where you got

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40/1929 (Pt. III), pp. 541-43, N.M.M.L.

your facts but obviously they are all wrong. I am not aware of my ever having suggested that you should formally write to the defence committee offering your services. It may be that some incorrect press report misled you.

What happened was this. At the time of the meeting of the All India Congress Committee at Bombay several meetings of the central defence committee took place. At that time we had to fix up the defence in the case. Ultimately some arrangements were made. You will remember that we met several times in Bombay and you did not mention anything about the Meerut case. As I was leaving Bombay I saw a note in the press that you had agreed to take up the defence in Meerut. Press reports are not always accurate and I did not know what exactly you might have said. I enquired from some members of the defence committee and they did not know anything about it. Later in Calcutta I was asked by a press representative if the defence committee had arranged with you for the defence. I told him that the defence committee would of course be very glad to have you undertake the defence but we had no knowledge on the subject excepting the press report that had appeared. This is all that I said. I do not know if this statement was an offence in your eyes. Anyway it never struck me in that light. My point was that such statements are made by third parties without sufficient justification and I was afraid that some one may not have correctly reported your words. There was no question of your formally writing to any committee.

I am writing this letter to you because I do not want you or anyone else to think ill of the Meerut defence committee in spite of the fact that I happen to be a humble member of it. I would not have troubled you if the matter had been a purely personal one.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

20. To S. Srinivasa Iyengar¹

27/8/1929

Dear Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar,

I have just received your letter. I am glad to learn that the newspaper report to which I referred in my last letter was incorrect.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40/1929 (Pt. IV), pp. 613-614, N.M.M.L.

Regarding the report of what I said about your appearing for the Meerut defence I hope you will agree with me that I did or said nothing which was in any way discourteous to you. Indeed I did not give a formal interview at all on the first occasion. Some newspaper man made it up after hearing scraps of conversation and rushed to the papers. I was annoyed when I saw this. Later I told the Free Press or A.P. representative that this was not correct and asked him to state that your taking up the defence would be welcome but I did not yet know definitely if you had agreed to it. There was no question of your formally writing to the defence committee.

I saw the report in the *Chronicle* but neither Nariman nor any one else spoke to me then or later on the subject. I must confess that I doubted if you would be able to go as you are much too busy to go to Meerut for six months or more. I was told that previously you had said that much as you would like to go you could not possibly spare the time. It was not unnatural for me to conclude that the report in the *Chronicle* might not be quite correct. I was going to write to you but the simultaneous illness of both my wife and sister, which took me to Calcutta, kept me occupied for a considerable time, and the matter escaped my mind.

Anyhow I should like to assure you that whatever my other failings may be, and they are no doubt many, I never intended any discourtesy to you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

21. To A. C. N. Nambiar¹

23 September 1929

My dear Nanu,

...It has been publicly stated in the Meerut trial that government has issued special orders for my correspondence to be intercepted. Of course I knew this well enough. Latterly however this interception seems to have resulted in an almost complete stoppage of my foreign mail. Your letters dribble through. Almost all other letters are stopped. This is rather annoying but one has to grin and put up with it...

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 20/1929 (Pt. II), p. 109, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

ARTICLES AND ADDRESSES

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC

1. Speech at Mahila Vidyapith, Allahabad¹

Mr. Chancellor,² brothers and sisters,
 I thank you for the honour you have done me in asking me to lay the foundation-stone of the *Vidyapitha*. I was rather surprised to receive this invitation and I hesitated to accept it. I have always thought that it was the business of high officials and revered elders to perform such ceremonies. I belong to neither of these categories. I have also found that on such occasions it is the usual custom to utter pious platitudes which mean little. But you are perhaps aware that being a rebel by nature, I am no lover of the platitudes of the bygone age, and it may be that something that I may say today will not be pleasing to many of you here. But you have taken the risk in inviting me. I have accepted this invitation partly because I was connected with this institution when I was the Chairman of the Municipal Board. But my chief attraction has been the interest that I take in women's education and women's rights.

A great French idealist, Charles Fourier³ once said: "One could judge the degree of civilization of a country by the social and political position of its women." And if we are to judge India today, we shall have to judge her by her women. The future that we build up will also be judged by the position of Indian women. I must confess to you that I am intensely dissatisfied with the lot of the Indian women today. We hear a good deal about Sita and Savitri. They are revered names in India and rightly so. But I have a feeling that these echoes from the past are raised chiefly to hide our present deficiencies and to prevent us from attacking the root cause of women's degradation in India today.

1. 31 March 1928. Reprinted in *Life and Speeches of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru*, edited by R. Dwivedi, Allahabad 1929, pp. 63-68.

2. Kailash Nath Katju.

3. (1772-1837); French philosopher.

I find from a reference to the report of this institution that it was started to give special instruction to women. It was laid down that while man was the bread-winner, woman's place was in the home and her ideal should be that of a devoted wife and nothing more. Her chief delight should be in skilfully rearing her children and serving her revered elders. May I say that I do not agree with this ideal of women's life or education? What does it signify? It means that woman has one profession and one only, that is the profession of marriage and it is our chief business to train her for this profession. Even in this profession her lot is to be one of secondary importance. She is always to be the devoted help-mate, the follower and the obedient slave of her husband and others. I wonder if any of you here has read Ibsen's⁴ *Doll's House*; if so, you will perhaps appreciate the word "Doll" when I use it in this connection.

The future of India cannot consist of dolls and playthings and if you made half the population of a country a mere plaything of the other half, an encumbrance on others, how will you ever make progress? Therefore I say that you must face the problem boldly and attack the roots of the evil. We have *pardah* and child marriage and denial of rights to women in so many fields. Go to any country and you will see bright-faced boys and girls playing and growing strong in mind and body. Here children of the same age are kept in *pardah*, locked up in cages almost, and denied in a large measure all freedom. They are married just when they should be growing physically and intellectually and are thus stunted and made miserable for life.

If this *Vidyapitha* really stands for the progress of our women, it must attack these evil customs. But I should like to remind the women present here that no people, no group, no community, no country, has ever got rid of its disabilities by the generosity of the oppressor. India will not be free until we are strong enough to force our will on England and the women of India will not attain their full rights by the mere generosity of the men of India. They will have to fight for them and force their will on the menfolk before they can succeed.

I hope therefore that this *Vidyapitha* will be instrumental in sending out, into the province and the country, women who are rebels against the unjust and tyrannical social customs of the day and who will fight all who oppose this progress; women who are as much soldiers of the country as the best men.

4. Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906); Norwegian dramatist who had a profound influence on the theatre and drama throughout Europe.

2. The Poverty of India and Its Cure¹

The National Week celebrations are at hand. Nine years ago, on the 6th April, the new struggle for India's independence was launched and on 13th April thousands of our brothers were shot dead or wounded in the Jallianwala Bagh. These nine years have seen many ups and downs. Our movement gained momentum and then abated. Yet, the struggle continued and is still on. So long as the reasons for which the struggle was launched and the declaration of independence made remain, the battle cannot be over. This struggle is not merely for glory or honour although it involves, to a very great extent, the question of the honour of our country and our people. In reality the fight for independence is a question of subsistence. We are starving and so demand food. We are thirsty so we want water. Till we get these we cannot rest.

These are not matters to be uttered or acted upon hastily. It is essential that we think calmly on them, discover the basic causes of our country's weakness and then find the remedy.

It is well known that India was famous all over the world for her wealth. All the countries of the world thought and rightly regarded India as the land of milk and honey. In olden times, foreign invasions were prompted by the lure of India's richness, and prospects of obtaining enormous booty. All travellers who came to India eloquently described her wealth and prosperity. Britain and the other countries of Europe were attracted by these tales of India's wealth and thought that trade with such a prosperous country would be profitable.

So India in the past had indeed been rich. There is no need to elaborate on her condition today. In every village, the under-nourished men and women, in tattered clothes, and in small and unhealthy hovels, amply demonstrate our present state. Millions die because of ordinary epidemics. This clearly shows that the people have not enough resistance to withstand even the ordinary changes of climate. Poverty is daily on the increase. Only a few are rich; the majority are poor. India's poverty is so widespread that today it is the poorest country in the world. Leading economists have conducted investigations into the average annual income of the people of India. Their findings are:

1. Pamphlet published in Hindi, April 1928 J. N. Miscellaneous Papers, N.M.M.L.

AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME OF AN INDIAN

	Rs.
Dadabhai Naoroji	20
Government estimate of 1882	27
William Digby ²	17½
Lord Curzon	30
Prof. Joshi ³ & Wadia ⁴	44
Visvesvaraya ⁵	45
Prof. Kale ⁶	40 to 48
Dr. Balakrishna ⁷	21

The findings vary but it is agreed that every Indian has an average income of about Rs. 50/-. This average, however, includes the millionaires as well. One can deduce from this how meagre is the average income of the villager. In contrast we have the average incomes of other countries:

COUNTRY	AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME PER HEAD
England	750
U.S.A.	1080
Germany	450
France	570
Italy	345
Canada	600
Australia	810
Japan	90

A glance at these figures is enough to show how poor we are today. There was a time when people came here to make money; today Indians are the poorest of the poor.

India was still rich and prosperous when the British came. Various kinds of articles were manufactured here. Handicrafts, particularly textiles, were of extremely good quality. Commodities made in India were exported in exchange for gold. Initially, the English had come to

2. (1849-1904); journalist who sympathised with the Indian nationalist movement; editor, *Madras Times* 1877-79; founder and director, Indian Political Agency London, 1887-92; editor, *India* 1890-92; "*Prosperous*" *British India*, which he wrote in 1901, was proscribed by the British Government.
- 3-4. G. N. Joshi, Professor of Economics, Wilson College Bombay, joint author with P. A. Wadia of *The Wealth of India* (1925).
5. M. Visvesvaraya, (1861-1962); Chief Engineer, Government of Mysore, 1900; Dewan of Mysore, 1912-18; one of the pioneers of planning in India.
6. V. G. Kale, Professor of Economics, Fergusson College, Poona; Member, Indian Tariff Board, 1923-25.
7. Professor of Economics at Kolhapur.

India with the intention of selling Indian goods in foreign markets at enormous profit. Then a number of machines were invented in England and cloth began to be manufactured in mills. However in the beginning these British textiles could not compete with Indian cloth, which was much cheaper even in England. Various measures were therefore taken in England to curb the sale of Indian calicoes and heavy taxes were imposed upon them. They even went to the extent of penalising those who were seen wearing certain varieties of Indian cloth. They were totally for local cloth and would not allow foreign cloth to carry away their bullion or to wreck their own industries.

Consequently export of Indian cloth to England completely stopped. But there was still enough market for Indian cloth in India itself. The English politicians now began to worry about sales of their mill-made cloth abroad. To secure this at the expense of India was the easiest way of all. British cloth began to be imported into India free of duty. Indian cloth could not now compete with British cloth, because it was already burdened with heavy taxation. In this way, first the external trade and then the internal trade of Indian cloth were destroyed by the British. At first foreign cloth began to be used in the bigger towns which were easily accessible by railways; and later it reached the villages as well.

What was the effect of this on India and on Britain? The money from India helped to keep the British factories running. The British weavers began to work in the factories, i.e. on leaving their old profession they were provided with a new occupation. Britain's wealth increased greatly in proportion to the output of these factories.

The Indian farmer who used to supplement his income by plying the *charkha* in his spare time was also suddenly deprived of his extra income. Weavers, carders and dyers became unemployed. They were forced to fall back on the land for a livelihood, by cultivating the land or by working as labourers, but there was already enough pressure on the land. The result was that the majority of the people were compelled to act as farm labourers, and somehow manage to keep alive. The result was obvious. The national income had already decreased to a great extent. The unemployed became a serious burden on the land, and as a result other kisans also became poorer. This is the root cause of India's poverty. There are very few vocations left and the majority of the people try to subsist on the proceeds of a little bit of land. And this poverty began from the time the British came here because they started their own trade while destroying ours.

We can see in the bigger towns a few wealthy traders, a few shopkeepers who sell foreign cloth, and some rich money-lenders. There are

also some well-to-do zamindars, lawyers, doctors and government officials. But all of them put together constitute only a handful of the total population of India. India cannot be called prosperous because of the wealth of these few individuals. The shopkeepers dealing in foreign cloth receive only an anna or two in the rupee, the rest of the profit goes to England. If home-made cloth could have been sold here instead of foreign cloth, then Indians too could share in this profit, which is taken away to England. The money-lenders are rich only because they exploit the kisan and impoverish him.

Everyone knows that there have been a number of terrible famines in India during the past 50 years. There were famines even before the arrival of the British but as far as we know they were not as devastating as the present ones. This was so, in spite of the fact that in those days there were many difficulties which do not exist today. If there was a famine in one part of the country, there was no means of transporting food from another part. Today, there are many railways and grain can easily be transported from one place to the other. In those days, in spite of famines there was never any complaint regarding dearth of food in India. Even during periods of famine wheat was exported abroad. Under the British, grain is available but there is no money to buy it. Now it is not a shortage of foodgrains but of money.

People say that famines are due to an increase in the population but in fact India's population has hardly risen in comparison with other countries.

The following figures prove that in comparison with other countries the population of India has risen very little in the last 50 years:

Germany	59%
England	58%
Russia	73.9%
Europe	45.4%
India	18.9%

Moreover, the cultivated land and its produce have definitely increased, so it cannot be argued that famines have been caused by a rise in the population. Famines occur because the country is poor. Much of its wealth has been drained away and even what is left is now a "golden stream" which flows towards England in various forms—as wages and pensions of important Englishmen, as interest and profit and above all as payment for cloth. Britain receives Rs. 70 crores annually on the basis of this textile trade alone. If we stopped the sale of foreign cloth here, these 70 crores could be divided among our kisans, weavers, dyers,

spinners, shopkeepers and others. Many people who are now unemployed and a burden on the land could take to other professions thus increasing the variety of our country's produce and adding to its wealth.

British cloth can be ousted either by Indian mill-made cloth or by *khadi* or by both. There is no objection to wearing Indian mill-made cloth but it should be remembered that there are many mills in India which are being run with British capital, and the profits of which go to Britain. There is no difference between the cloth made in these mills and the foreign cloth. Secondly if we want to boycott all British cloth immediately, that cannot be done by replacing it with Indian mill cloth. Big mills cannot be erected overnight in large numbers. This will require crores of rupees and will take years. But *khadi* cloth can be made immediately at much less expense, and every man could assist in this. The country gets the full benefit of this, and the money received by its sale is divided among the poor, who need the money most. It is different from what takes place in the mills when the profits go to a few and the many remain poor.

At present *khadi* does not compete with Indian mill-made cloth. Our objective should be that Indian mill-made cloth and *khadi* should together drive out foreign cloth completely from the country. And we are confident that if the public helps, this can be done.

One result of this will be that national wealth will remain within the country and the poor will benefit. Also the British will be hit hard. Those who have hitherto looked down upon us and have not heeded our words will now be forced to do as we desire and thereby we shall be able to free the country and banish all its troubles.

Attention has been drawn to a few important points in this pamphlet. There is much to be said about them and several books have been written on the subject. Those who are concerned about India's poverty and slavery and who are interested in achieving freedom for the motherland should give thought to these problems. They too will conclude that without Swaraj our misfortunes cannot be ended. To attain Swaraj and particularly to eradicate poverty, the first step is to boycott foreign cloth. This is of primary benefit to us and will exert considerable pressure on England.

So I hope that the wellwishers of the country will strive for a total boycott of foreign cloth and the spread of *khadi*. This should be specially done during this National Week.

Jawaharlal Nehru
Agent

United Provinces Charkha Sangh

3. On Kisan Agitation at Katahara¹

Sir,

In your issue dated July 4th there is a message from Benares on the peasant movement in the U.P. This message refers to meetings in various places and specially purports to give some details of a meeting in Kathar (? Katihar) over which I had the honour to preside. I shall not presume on your indulgence in giving details of this movement. Everyone who has any acquaintance with the villages of these zamindar-ridden province knows of the misery of the peasantry and the way taluqdars and zamindars fatten on extortions from the poorest in the land. Under these circumstances peasant movements are bound to arise and no one need be surprised at them.

But I should like to correct a serious misstatement in the message. It is stated there that the meeting at Kathar or Katihar condemned the action of the police who are reported to have threatened and beaten the peasantry. The police have many sins to their discredit and I have often criticised them. But in the present instance this charge so far as I am aware is entirely groundless. The facts are that there is a big zamindari—the Saidih *taluqa*—in the *tahsil* of Handia in the district of Allahabad. The present owner of this zamindari is a young widow but the father of this lady is the manager and for all practical purposes the owner of the estate. Numerous complaints of extortion and ill-treatment of the kisans by this gentleman have been made in the course of the last few months. The Allahabad District Congress Committee ultimately appointed a committee to investigate and find out the truth of these complaints. This committee has taken a large number of depositions of kisans in support of the charge made.

About two weeks ago, on the 17th of June, the local kisans and some others organised a meeting in Katihar which is situated in the Siadih *taluqa*. I was not present at this meeting but I am informed by the organisers that a large number of men armed with *lathis* came to the place of meeting and stated that they had been sent by the

1. Allahabad, 4 July 1928. J. N. Miscellaneous Papers, N.M.M.L.

This letter was sent by Jawaharlal to the *Pioneer* but was not published.

manager of the Siadih estate to break up the meeting. This they proceeded to do by threatening everybody who came and beating a number of kisans. Not desiring to provoke a riot the organisers abandoned the meeting.

This meeting had not been officially organised by the district Congress committee although some members of it were among the organisers. In view of what had happened however the committee felt that a very important issue had been raised—the right of the kisans to assemble peacefully together at a public meeting—and they could not tolerate this kind of forcible dispersal. The committee thereupon convened a public meeting for the Sunday following the 24th June at the same place—Katihar. The President of the committee, Dr. Kailas Nath Katju, wrote to Mr. Parmeshri Dayal, the manager of the Siadih *taluka* and, giving an account of the happenings on June 17th, asked him if it was true that he had sent the men with *lathis* to break up the meeting. Mr. Parmeshri Dayal was informed of the next meeting on June 24th and was invited to be present at it and to have his say. He refrained, however, from answering Dr. Katju's letter or denying the allegations and did not attend the meeting.

It is this subsequent meeting which is apparently referred to in your Benares message. The meeting was a very great success and about two thousand kisans attended in spite of the fact that work in the fields had begun in right earnest owing to the coming of the rains. They condemned the action of those who had broken up the meeting on June 17th and further condemned the methods and behaviour of the manager of Siadih towards his tenantry. It further called upon the kisans to organise themselves to protect their interests and supported the Bardoli Satyagraha.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. Swaraj and Socialism¹

India is rapidly approaching the cross-roads of its destiny, and we shall have to make a vital choice. I do not refer to the seven uninvited gentlemen from Britain; greater things are happening than the Simon Commission. The world is in a ferment and strange forces are at work. Even

1. Article in *The New Leader*, a journal edited by Fennier Brockway, and reprinted in *The Hindu*, 11 August 1928.

from India, with its immemorial weight of tradition and its fear of change, the challenge to the dead past has gone forth and increases in volume.

Right action can only follow dispassionate thinking and some knowledge of the forces that are shaping the modern world. We have today a great number of people prescribing remedies for the diseases that afflict India. Nearly all lay stress on mass organisation and many talk of unity among the various political groups. But there is seldom a consideration of principle, of ultimate ideals, of the place of India in the world. What are we aiming at? What manner of country should we like India to be?

Before we answer these questions, it is worthwhile taking a larger view of world events. We all know the great changes which have followed the industrial revolution, although they have not affected India as much as other countries. Industrialism has resulted in the concentration of wealth in a few countries and a few individuals, in a struggle for raw material and markets, and it has brought into existence the imperialism of the last century. It has caused wars and has laid the seed of future wars. Latterly, it has taken the shape of an economic imperialism, which without the possession of territory is as potent in exploiting other countries as any colonial empire of yesterday.

All this is known, but what perhaps is not sufficiently realised is the international character of industrialism. It has broken down national boundaries and has made each nation dependent on others. The idea of nationalism is almost as strong today as it was, and in its holy name wars are still fought and millions slaughtered. But it is a myth which is not in keeping with reality. The world has become internationalised. Production is international, markets are international and transport is international. Only men's ideas continue to be governed by a dogma which has no real meaning.

Many of us, regardless of what is happening all around us, still live in the ancient past. Some want the Vedic age, others a reproduction of the early days of Islam. We forget that our ancient civilisations were meant for different conditions. Many of our traditions, habits and customs, our social laws, our class system, the position we give to women, and the dogmas which religion has imposed on us, are the relics of a past utterly out of joint with modern conditions. India will only progress, as Turkey and Russia have progressed, when she discards the myths and dogmas of yesterday in favour of the reality of today.

Many of us who denounce British imperialism in India do not realise that it is not a phenomenon peculiar to the British race or to

India, or that it is the consequence of industrial development on capitalist lines. Capitalism necessarily leads to exploitation of one man by another, one group by another, and one country by another. If, therefore, we are opposed to this imperialism and exploitation, we must also be opposed to capitalism. The only alternative that is offered to us is some form of socialism.

As a necessary result of this decision, we must fight British dominion in India, not only on nationalistic grounds, but also on social and international grounds. Britain may well permit us to have a large measure of political liberty, but this will be worth little if she holds economic dominion over us. Another consequence of the socialistic view is that we must change all customs which are based on privilege of birth and caste. We must cast out all parasites and drones, so that the many who lack the good things of life may share in them. Poverty and want are not economic necessities. The world and our country produce enough (or can produce enough) for the masses to attain a high standard of well-being, but unhappily the good things are cornered by a few and the millions live in want. In India, the classic land of famine, famines are not caused by want of food, but by the want among the masses of the money to buy food.

We may demand freedom for our country on many grounds, but ultimately it is the economic one that matters. Our educated classes have so far taken the lead in the fight for Swaraj, but in doing so they have seldom paid heed to the needs of the masses. And so the demand has taken the form of the "Indianisation of the Services", of higher posts being thrown open to Indians. Whenever vital questions affecting the masses have arisen, they have been postponed till Swaraj has been attained. But what shall it profit the masses of India—the peasantry, the landless labourers, the workers, the shop-keepers, the artisans—if everyone of the offices held by Englishmen in India today is held by an Indian? It may benefit them a little, because they will be able to bring more pressure to bear on an Indian than on an alien government but fundamentally their condition cannot improve until the social fabric is changed.

Even from a narrow point of view it is now recognised that no effective pressure can be brought to bear on the British Government without mass support but there is fear of the masses and little is done. Mass support cannot come from vague ideals of Swaraj. It is essential that we must clearly lay down an economic programme for the masses, with socialism as its ideal. We must cultivate a revolutionary outlook. Everything that goes towards creating a revolutionary atmosphere helps; everything that lessens it, hinders. I use the word "revo-

lutionary" without any necessary connection with violence. Indeed violence may be the very reverse of revolution. Acts of terrorism often have a counter-revolutionary effect and are injurious to the national cause.

Everything indicates that before long another great war will come. Indian soldiers are made to do the dirty work of British imperialism in China, in Persia, and Mesopotamia, and are used to suppress peoples who are our friends and neighbours and who have done us no harm. It is time we put an end to this shameful exploitation of the courage of our manhood. Let us make up our minds now that if the British Government embarks on any warlike adventure and endeavours to exploit India, it will be our duty to refuse to take part in such a war or to cooperate in anyway whatever.

5. The Kisan and Swaraj¹

We have been hearing of Swaraj for a long time now. Long speeches are made about it and kisans are asked to help in the fight for Swaraj. But the poor kisans have enough troubles of their own. The British Government tyrannizes over them; the landlords dominate over them; the police, the patwaris, the agents, the chaprasis all harass the kisans and add to his troubles. In such circumstances, of what use can Swaraj be to the kisan! He can give attention to no other problems than how to lighten his daily burden; to provide enough food for his family and to look after them. Has Swaraj anything to do with this problem? Of what use is Swaraj to the kisan if it does not? If only the educated townsfolk are to benefit by Swaraj, why should the kisan struggle for it?

What is the main problem of the kisans? Most of them have no land. They earn their livelihood by labour and that work too they can get only for a few days in a year. Even those who own some land live constantly in the fear of being ejected. It is said that the new Act has made it difficult to eject a kisan, but in reality all know that this Act is of no use. If the landlord so desires he can eject even the occupancy tenant. The law is defective, but, even if it were

1. Pamphlet published in Hindi, September 1928. J. N. Miscellaneous Papers, N.M.M.L.

not, the poor farmer would not be able to derive benefit from it. The zamindar has access to high officials. The police, the court, all help him. And he has money enough for all these. If a case between a landlord and kisan comes up in the court, it is difficult for the kisan to win the case, no matter how just his cause. The kisans often get no receipts for the rents they pay. If the landlord or his agent allege that he has not paid rent, it becomes impossible for the kisan to prove otherwise. He is sure to lose the case and be ejected.

The kisan has to pay large *nazranas* besides the rent; and various kinds of unlawful taxes are exacted from him. He is also often made to work without payment. If an officer comes on tour, they are made to submit fictitious receipts.

These are only a few of the hardships which kisans have to suffer. There are many more, and it is difficult to enumerate all of them. How can these be set right and what will be the fate of the kisans in the Swaraj of which there is so much talk?

In our country few people live in towns, and even fewer are educated. The majority of our people are kisans who live in the villages or labourers who work in the factories. If only the few people living in the towns derive benefit from Swaraj and the kisans remain as they are, then it cannot be deemed to be Swaraj for all. It will be Swaraj of the rich only. Even to this day, we see a section of our people which is extremely rich, be they zamindars or factory-owners or money-lenders or lawyers. On the other hand, a much larger section is steeped in abject poverty. A few reside in palaces, the rest have not even a hut to live in. They even get hardly enough to eat. This is totally against justice. Those who actually work do not reap the benefits, while a few live in ease and comfort without having to work because of either inherited wealth or income derived through usury. Justice can only be achieved when all have equal opportunities to earn and progress and each is paid according to his work.

Therefore we must strive for that Swaraj which ensures such justice, where a few rich men do not live in comfort and exploit others but there is an equitable distribution of the country's wealth. If such a Swaraj can be attained, will not the lot of the kisan be better? As the majority of our people are kisans, such a Swaraj will in fact be a government of the kisans, and when the kisans rule which zamindar or his agent or the police will dare to harass them!

Swaraj may be interpreted in different ways but the kisans should strive for such a Swaraj which ensures justice for him as well as others.

What shall be the shape of such a Swaraj? How can the present injustice be removed? So long as the land is owned by the zamindars,

till then the kisans will be under their tyranny. At present the landlords reap the maximum benefit without doing anything, and those who do not produce anything are a burden on the country. In an ideal country there would be no landlords. A number of countries had very big landlords but they have been removed and the land given to the kisans. We should also try to do the same. Every farmer should own as much land as he and his family are able to cultivate. He should pay a certain amount as tax to the main *Panchayat* of the country. This big *Panchayat* will be the government of the country, but that State will be responsible to the people. The amount collected as tax would then be spent for the improvement of the country. If the landlord is done away with, the kisan's income will increase and they will be more independent. The national revenues will also increase, and this will enable the government to do more for the welfare of the kisans.

In other countries the government regards it as its prime duty to improve the conditions of the peasants. We too could do this if we had a government of the kisans. Canals could be dug, wells could be constructed, hospitals and dispensaries could be opened in the villages. Arrangements can be made for the proper education of the children. If the government is ours and its expenditure is also for our benefit then no one would mind paying taxes to the government. But whatever money is paid to the landlords does not benefit anyone, neither the kisans nor the public.

Therefore our first objective should be the immediate abolition of the system of landlords. We should strive for this in our *Swaraj*. But it is well known that the landlords are a powerful group and the might of the British Government is behind them. So to remove them will not be easy. But we should keep our ideal before us and strive our utmost for attaining it. Side by side we should also try to reduce our daily miseries as much as possible. This will be discussed in another pamphlet.

6. The Misfortunes of the Kisans¹

It has been written in another pamphlet that the troubles of the kisans will be over only when they become the owners of the land and there

1. Pamphlet published in Hindi, December 1928. J. N. Miscellaneous Papers, N.M.M.L.

are no big landlords. We should try to understand clearly what this means. In other countries this principle is accepted and the number of landlords has been reduced to a few. In our country in some provinces like Punjab and Gujarat there are few big landlords. There the kisans and small landowners are much better off than those in our province. If big landlords could be dispensed with, the condition of our kisans could soon be raised to the same level.

But these things will take time. In spite of the continuance of landlords, we should try to get rid of whatever difficulties we can. What are these hardships? How do they arise? It is very difficult to give an exhaustive list. But generally they are of three kinds :—

- (1) Those arising out of grossly unfair laws, i.e. the laws are against the kisan;
- (2) those resulting from the oppressions of the zamindars, their agents and the police;
- (3) those created by the kisans themselves acting in a way that cause harm to them.

Every province of the country has different laws regarding the kisans. In our province itself, Oudh has one Tenancy Act while Agra has another.² The condition of the kisans in Oudh especially was very bad. There are big taluqdars who extracted huge *nazranas* from the petty kisans who had no occupancy rights, and ejected them whenever they liked. They were also victims of torture in various other ways. Eight years ago the kisans of Oudh started a great agitation. They organized big meetings and formed *panchayats*. The government backed the taluqdars and tried to suppress the movement by sending thousands of kisans to jail and taking bonds from others. The agitation was no doubt suppressed for the time being but it had its effect and a new law for the kisans was enacted. This Act was slightly better than the previous one and ostensibly, at least, dispossession was minimized. But even this Act is unjust and the kisans of Oudh still face many hardships.

In Agra too, a new law was recently enacted. It was proclaimed that it would protect the kisans and be more fair to him. But if the law benefited a few it has caused even greater hardships than before to others. And all the kisans of our province are aware of the hardships the Agra kisans have to suffer.

2. The two Acts regulating the relations between landholders and tenants in force in 1921 were the Oudh Rent Act of 1886 and the Agra Tenancy Act of 1901. Both these Acts were amended in 1921 and 1926 respectively and were claimed to confer security of tenure on tenants.

We should try to bring these oppressive laws to the notice of our countrymen and try to get them repealed. We should not forget our fundamental principle i.e. the abolition of landlordism. And while keeping the ultimate end in view, we should try to get the existing laws amended in our favour as best as we can. In order to get this done the kisans must elect their own *panchayats* and discuss the laws among themselves. They should also draw up a list of amendments which they feel would benefit them. They should then combine and start a big agitation for securing these amendments. Special attention should be paid to the question of dispossession, so that only reasonable rents might be realised from them.

Howsoever good the laws may be, a wicked landlord can always oppress his kisans. Even today there are many taluqdars and zamindars, who realise illegal taxes and exact *begar*, and harass the farmers in many ways. It was said in Oudh that a certain zamindar realised over 50 illegal taxes. How is one to prevent these? The only remedy lies in kisans organizing themselves and forming their own *panchayats*; to deal with those who torture them. An agent or chaprasi may be able to suppress an individual kisan but if at any place there is a kisans organisation and they are united to help each other, then even the biggest taluqdar will not be able to suppress them. Therefore it is essential to build up such organisations. The way in which this can be done will be discussed in another pamphlet.

It is said that a man falls by his own stupidity or weakness. The chief reason why our kisans have fallen so low lies in their own evil customs. When they get rid of these practices, they will gain strength automatically. If they strengthen their organisation quickly they will be able to safeguard their rights. Some kisans blame their fate or their sins and regard them as *karma*. These beliefs merely delude others as well as ourselves. He who always bemoans his fate and does nothing, will always remain down-trodden. He who is courageous is bound to succeed. So we should forget such talk and realise that we can mould our own destiny and lessen our hardships if we so desire and apply ourselves to the task. In other countries people do not talk much about fate. They do their work without sitting idle and worrying about their previous births. This is why other countries have progressed so much and we have remained backward.

It is essential that we think about our weaknesses and our bad habits and consider how best we can remove them.

This will be discussed in the next pamphlet.

7. Unemployment in India¹

How does a country become wealthy? By the labour of its people. The more industrious the people, the greater their production and the richer the country. Those who do not work are a burden on the country and impoverish it. How many of us are adding to our country's wealth and how many are making it poorer?

The kisan's work on the land is productive and adds to the prosperity of our country. Labourers and workers do the same. A carpenter makes something useful like a plough with a piece of wood; a weaver or a blacksmith increases our wealth by his craft. A good writer or artist, too, is an asset to the country. Teachers also help in their own way for education is the greatest of riches and is the chief means of producing wealth. The shopkeepers and tradesmen sell commodities produced by others when they are needed most and thus help to enrich the land.

On the other hand, take a zamindar, who is rich; but where did he get his money? He received it as rent from his tenants. This transfer of money has not increased the country's wealth. Similarly a money-lender, who prospers by collecting heavy interest from others, does not benefit the country in any way. Lawyers too become rich by extracting money from others. As for the idle rich, who live on the property inherited from their ancestors, they are a burden on the country. They might sometimes help in seeing that justice is done, but their profession does not benefit the country to any great extent.

Every man requires food, drink and clothing. If he does not, by his labour, produce sufficient for his needs, he impoverishes the country. Naturally a country with many such people deteriorates. There are many in India who are totally idle, doing practically no work of any kind.

It is said that there are 52 lakh *sadhus* and beggars in India. Possibly some of them are honest. But there is no doubt that most of them are completely useless people, who wish to dupe others and live on their earnings without working themselves. Our kisans are so simple

1. Pamphlet published in Hindi, April 1929. J. N. Miscellaneous Papers, N.M.M.L.

that they worship and feed a man who bears the slightest resemblance to a *sadhu*. But saffron robes or a long *tika* do not make a *sadhu*. Our country is overburdened by these lakhs of idlers and worthless people. And this will continue as long as our kisans continue to have such blind faith in *sadhus*. We should not help these people and force them to work instead. It should be clearly realized that if these 52 lakhs also worked, production would greatly increase. There are many who take advantage of the credulity of others e.g. quacks, and *pandas* at places of pilgrimage—who rob people in the name of religion. These too are a burden on the country and should try to take up work which will bring wealth and prosperity to the country.

I have said that kisans add to the country's wealth by their work. But in our country almost all kisans are idle for a few months every year. Their women too are generally unemployed. Everyone has sufficient work during the harvesting season; but after that there is plenty of leisure and many become a burden on the country for those months. Those without land and working on the land of others are also without employment for a part of this time. We have 20 crores of farmers, and their idle period varies from 2 to 5 months in the year. If we take an average of 2 months per year we find that $3\frac{1}{4}$ crores are always unemployed in the villages. If such is the degree of unemployment, how can the country become rich?

If we are to eradicate poverty we must first do away with this widespread unemployment. We should try to remove or at least lessen the number of the idle professions. This is not easy, but we should start doing it gradually.

Two steps we can take immediately: refuse alms to the *sadhus* and urge them to work instead, and see that the kisans are usefully employed in their spare time. They should be found some supplementary work.

Mahatma Gandhi has told us how to do this. The kisan can easily spin thread on the *charkha* and grow a little cotton on his land. The village carpenter can make *charkhas* at low cost and everyone can easily learn to handle them. Unemployment can be rooted out at once if all kisans and the women of their households start spinning. In this way they can also get more cloth for their own needs: and at the same time many carders, weavers, dyers and washermen would secure employment. The country's wealth could increase and the kisan's troubles would end.

GENERAL

8. India and the need for international contacts¹

After a long period of not very splendid isolation India is again beginning to look to the outside world and to take interest in other countries. It is realised that the modern world is closely knit together and no part of it can ignore the rest. Science and industry and new methods of transportation have made each country dependent in a large measure on the others, and though the myth of nationalism flourishes and holds men's minds, it is an outworn creed and internationalism approximates more and more to reality. Wars can seldom be localised, nor can peace endure in a country when the rest of the world is at war. Idealists tell us that the only way to put an end to the ceaseless conflict between nations and to inaugurate an era of world peace is to create a super-state to which all nations will owe allegiance or to have a cooperative world commonwealth.

It is difficult for us in India to think of the larger issue, of world problems and world peace, when the problem that confronts us always is how to free ourselves from our present subjection. And yet our problem is but part of the larger one, and it may be that we shall also have helped greatly in establishing world peace. If imperialism is the real cause of most of the exploitation and troubles in the world today, the classical and typical example of imperialism is the British Empire of India, and the freedom of India becomes an essential condition for world freedom.

Many of our friends in India and outside are therefore continually laying stress on the necessity for us to develop contacts with other countries so that we may appreciate the forces that are moulding the world today and be able to coordinate our activities to them; some of them tell us that we should cooperate with all other anti-imperialist forces to combat imperialism; others favour an Asiatic federation; while a third group are sanguine enough to want us to utilise the machinery of the League of Nations for our benefit. But all these agree that

1. Written on 13 May 1928 and published in *The New Era*, a quarterly published in Madras.

international contacts are necessary for us. Some who are of a contrary opinion fear that too much of internationalism may make us forget the real work at home and make us imagine that we can achieve our freedom with the help of outsiders. The fear is a real one but perhaps it is a little exaggerated. No one who has come up against the hard realities of the struggle is likely to forget that there is little of charity in international dealings and no country can make good except through its own efforts.

The advantages of international contacts from a purely political view point are evident enough. But there is another aspect of the question on which perhaps enough stress has not been laid.

Foreign rule and exploitation of a country have many sins to answer for. Some of the tragedies they bring in their train are obvious and frequent reference is made to them. But one unhappy, and yet unavoidable, consequence to which little attention is usually paid, is the concentration of nearly all activities in the struggle for freedom. The rich and many-coloured life of a nation loses its variety and its diversity and only one hue is visible, brilliant enough at times, but usually a drab grey covering the uniform misery of the people. The creative spirit can find little expression and the strength and energy of the chosen in the land are diverted to the long fight for freedom. There are brilliant episodes in this fight when the soul of a whole people is exalted and for the sake of an ideal even men of common clay do heroic deeds. But this work is one of destruction in the main and destruction and creation seldom go together. Ireland offers us a sad and yet a noble example of such a struggle for freedom. For seven hundred years or more she carried on her fight for independence. Her history is full of heroism and sacrifice but the rich and noble culture that was hers has almost passed away. India is another sorry example of stagnation and cultural death brought on by long years of foreign rule.

And yet the struggle for political freedom brings with it an intense desire for one's own culture and traditions. The hatred of foreign rule extends to the foreigner's ways and institutions, and an escape is sought from them in dreams of the past when the foreigner was not there. We think of the golden age of past times, of *Rama Raj*. And this very looking back makes us still more stagnant and rigid and incapable of creative work. We do not try to enrich the present with our thought and action. We merely worship the past and what we worship we make lifeless.

The culture of a people must have its roots in the national genius. It must smell of the soil and draw its inspiration from its past history. But it cannot live for ever on the earnings of its forefathers or on an

old bank account to which nothing is added. It must be a live and growing thing responsive to new conditions and flexible enough to adapt itself to them. In India the moment we tried to make our culture rigid in order to protect it from foreign incursions, we stopped its natural growth, and slow paralysis crept in and brought it near to death. We talk vaingloriously of our immortal civilisation, but what does it consist of today so far as the common people are concerned? Our religion is one of the kitchen, of what to touch and what not, to touch, of baths and top-knots, of all manner of marks and fasts, and ceremonies that have lost all meaning; our very gods are manufactured in the factories of England or Japan; our music chiefly consists of painful noises which accompany processions and ceremonials and make the day or night almost unbearable, and usually result in broken heads, or the terrible din whereby our Muslim friends mourn an ancient tragedy that took place in Arabia twelve and a half centuries ago; our artistic cravings are satisfied with hideous prints from Germany; our literature largely consists of sentimental and soppy effusions; in our thought there is little new, we merely repeat and paraphrase and expound *ad nauseam* what was said ages ago, or else we denounce it equally irrationally. The few brilliant exceptions that we have produced in recent times only serve to heighten the surrounding gloom.

We had everything in the past that made for a rich and varied culture and a progressive civilisation. And yet we have landed ourselves in a stagnant quagmire from which escape is not easy. We can effectively escape from it only when the struggle for political independence is ended in our favour, and our energy can be diverted to more creative channels. But success in that struggle depends in some measure on our social and cultural progress. It is a vicious circle and we have to attack the enemy on all fronts, though necessarily the political and economic fronts will claim most attention.

Thus whether we consider our problems from the standpoint of politics or economics or of culture and civilisation in their widest meanings, we are driven to the conclusion that we must end the isolation of India and try to understand world currents and world happenings. We must in addition to our nationalism develop an internationalism which is prepared to profit by the good things of other countries, and to co-operate with the progressive forces of the world. So far practically our sole contact with the outside world has been through England and the English language. This has been unfortunate for we have seen the world through English eyes and with English prejudices. And even with England our relations could not be healthy. Between the rulers and the ruled there can be no wholesome cooperation.

Our international contacts must now therefore be largely with countries other than England. Only thus can we gradually get out of the curious mentality of subservience to England, of the inevitability of the British connection, and see the world in proper perspective. Many of us imagine that because we are under British rule, England is the dominating force in the world today and we feel powerless before this colossus. A wider knowledge of the world situation will convince us that England is no longer what she was and the days of British dominion are numbered. But whatever the future of England may be the world is bigger than England and we cannot understand or profit by the varied cultures of different countries through England only.

We have had in our own day notable examples of eastern nations shaking off the lethargy of ages and making rapid progress through contact with other countries. Every one knows of Turkey but an even more remarkable example is that of Afghanistan. In the course of a very few years Afghanistan has risen from being a backwater of Asia, a dependency of England, to an independent position which commands respect everywhere. How did this happen except through the development of contacts with other countries? Today there are hundreds of young Afghan students in the universities of Europe. One finds them in large numbers in France and Italy and Germany and Turkey, even in Russia. But curiously enough out of the 1600 or more young Afghans studying in Europe, there are hardly any in England. They prefer, and rightly so, Paris, Berlin, Constantinople, Rome and Moscow to Imperial London.

Afghanistan and Nepal have much in common. Their geographical and strategic position is similar, and till a decade ago there was little to choose between the two so far as their political position was concerned. A few years however have made a tremendous difference, and while Afghanistan is forging ahead and taking an effective part in world politics, Nepal still continues in the ancient rut and is daily becoming more subservient to British policy. The difference between the two has been caused principally by world contacts in the case of one and the entire absence of them in the case of the other. If the rulers of Nepal were far-seeing enough they would also claim their full independence and their right to determine their foreign policy. They would also send their representatives to foreign countries and their students abroad to study the science and civilization of the modern world. No one, not even England, can say them nay, and within a brief space of time they would make their country—rich in everything today except wisdom and foresight—-independent and strong and prosperous. But they live in their little shells isolated and ignorant of

what happens elsewhere and their chief business appears to be to supply mercenary soldiers to England to be used against their own kith and kin in India.

Some among us feel that contact with the West is dangerous for our culture; it may not be able to survive the impact. If our culture is such a feeble thing the sooner it dies a natural death the better. But if there is any life left in it, it will derive fresh vigour from the healthy impact of other forces and will survive, changed it may be and more suited to the conditions of today, but still based fundamentally on the genius of the race. But the surest way of killing this culture of ours is to isolate it and keep it away from fresh air and make it die of suffocation.

International contacts are essential for India from every point of view. How then can we develop these contacts? Even today there are thousands of Indians, apart from students and labourers, settled in various parts of the world. One can find them not only in the frequented countries of western Europe, but in almost every country from China to Peru. There are exiles who cannot return to their homes, traders, and adventurous spirits who have ventured out without help or favour and have made good. In India we discuss our inability to provide officers for our armies, but in distant countries Indians have risen to high military rank and have even commanded air forces. Unhappily however these Indians in foreign countries are completely cut off from their mother country. They are mostly forgotten by us and we can profit little by them, except in individual cases. Probably the only people who know much about them are the officers of the British secret service. It would be desirable however for our organisation to get into touch with these scattered children of the country, to help them where they can, and to utilise their services for the service of the country whenever possible. There are many difficulties in the way, not the least of them being that most of these residents abroad are so much cut off from present-day India that it is a little difficult for them to appreciate the conditions here. But nonetheless something may be done if an effort is made. The real difficulty in the past has been our fear of compromising ourselves before the British. For it is the privilege of our rulers, among other things, to decide what company we may keep.

To develop political contacts the straightest, though not the easiest, way is for the National Congress to appoint its representatives in certain foreign countries. A few places of world importance may be chosen for this purpose: Paris, the greatest international centre today, New York, Constantinople, or Angora for the Middle East and the Islamic

countries, Moscow, and Tokyo for the Far East. These five places would cover all the live centres of world politics today. Through our representatives there we could keep in intimate touch with current happenings and with the men and women who count. We would also gradually build up a trained body of experts in international matters from whom will develop our diplomatic corps of the future. The difficulties in the way of the Congress are twofold, one of finance and the other and the more serious one of finding suitable representatives. The Congress cannot send out second-rate men to represent it and unhappily we are very poor in politicians of ability who can be expected to undertake this work. There is such a lack of good workers at home that it is difficult to spare one of them. A third difficulty we might have to face would be due to the attitude of the British Government. They will not fancy the idea of our sending representatives abroad, specially to Moscow. But whatever the difficulties may be, if the Congress was really eager to do something in this direction there is little doubt that it could make a beginning.

Another way for us to develop international contacts would be for our chambers of commerce to keep representatives in some foreign countries. I was given to understand in the Continent of Europe that such representatives, although they would be non-officials, would be treated with every consideration, and every facility would be given to them. Their presence would be helpful in developing trade relations with countries other than England and thus in helping in the boycott of British goods. Machinery for use in India could be purchased at better rates than in England, and markets for Indian goods could be found. I have been told that the sports goods manufactured in India have been gradually spreading out in many countries. If our merchants and chambers of commerce develop direct relations with other countries they will gradually free themselves from the stranglehold of the British banks.

It is customary now for large numbers of professors and students to utilise their vacations in paying visits to foreign countries to study conditions there. Americans of this kind, probably because they have the most money, are very much in evidence all over Europe, and even Russia is being invaded by them. I am afraid our students are too poor to visit foreign countries during the vacations but our professors should certainly follow the examples of their confreres in other countries. Our universities should send deputations specially with a view to study educational methods and other problems which might help. This is most necessary in the case of Russia which is passing through

a most interesting and instructive phase and offers problems very similar to ours.

Lastly, I would suggest that a definite and concerted attempt be made to divert the stream of Indian students which goes for study to England to other countries. Mere considerations of self-respect ought to have been sufficient to induce our students to keep away from England. We have all heard of the treatment that is meted out to them there, the difficulty of finding lodgings because most people object to Indians, the want of facilities for study, and the aggressive and offensive social atmosphere which an Indian has to encounter in England. But even apart from self-respect it is well known that continental and American universities teach much better and more thoroughly. If the Indian Civil Service or the Indian Medical Service or the profession of the bar is the objective of an Indian youth then he has little choice. He must go to England and face all the discomfitures and difficulties which are the lot of Indian students there. But if he desires to do any kind of creative or useful work and not be a mere hanger-on to the British Government or a member of an overcrowded and parasitic profession, then it is folly for him to go to England. He will get the best of training—scientific, technical, medical, surgical and cultural—elsewhere and will be treated with far greater courtesy and consideration.

The question of language usually keeps many people away from the continental countries. It is certainly a handicap to have to learn a new language suddenly in the middle of one's university career. But the difficulty is not so great as it appears and the reward of knowing an additional language is certainly worth all the trouble taken. From the national point of view it is very desirable for Indians to acquire a knowledge of other languages besides English. Educated men in India should try to know at least one foreign language. Too many of them know English already and there is no danger of English suffering from want of patronage so long as we remain a dependency and even after. It cannot displace our mother tongue, but it has become, as a friend of mine put it, the step-mother tongue of our intellectuals. It is therefore necessary for us to encourage other foreign languages. Our universities have not done much so far in this respect and there is great room for improvement. Even where other foreign languages are taught the medium of instruction is English, which is an exceedingly foolish way of teaching a third language. The average student would often have to translate twice before he can express himself to begin with in the new language. As a matter of fact there are certain grammatical resemblances between Hindustani and for instance French which would facilitate the learning of French through Hindustani direct. Our schools

and colleges should therefore start the teaching of foreign languages directly through Hindustani or Bengali or any other language of the country, without the intervention of English.

A knowledge of these foreign languages will make it easier for our students to go to France or Germany or Italy or Russia. But even for those who do not go out of the country it will open out new literatures, new worlds of thought and action; and it will enable them to follow the throbbing day to day life of another nation by means of its publications, its journals and reviews.

"To understand all is to forgive all", says the French proverb, and to understand another people and another nation is to like them and appreciate their good points. International contacts promote mutual comprehension and the spirit of goodwill and are thus the surest guarantees of an enduring peace.

9. Reply to address of the Calicut Municipal Council¹

Pandit Jawaharlal said that he was thankful to them for the address they were good enough to present to him. They had referred in the address to the fact that he had been connected with municipal administration also. Municipal administration covered a wide field of activities, and it was highly essential that one should study the various problems of a municipality. The activities of a municipal administration included not only sanitation, but also cultural and other sides of public life, and what was necessary was a standing programme of activities. Nothing would result from a vague and unsettled programme, and the question was how would they be able to draw up a definite programme of activities? The primary object of a municipality should be to create happiness and prosperity in the city, and that should be the ideal of every municipal council. They should give as much cultural and educational facilities as possible. It was the duty of a municipal administration to see that every man in the municipality had a home, and if there

1. 30 May 1928.. *The Hindu*, 31 May 1928.

was a single individual without a home, it was the fault of municipal administration. But, where were the funds to come from? They were suffering from paucity of funds in Calicut like many other larger municipalities.

He then compared the present prosperous condition of the Vienna Municipality with that of the other municipalities in the world, and said that that municipality was now one of the best in the world with all kinds of comforts and facilities for public life. Usually, the Municipal Acts they had, were not of a perfect kind, and the gentlemen, very often the Collectors and other officers, who sat in judgment over their activities, were not perfect symbols of municipal administration, for they would be perfectly ignorant of the various activities of municipal bodies. Unless they changed the Acts, it would be impossible for them to do anything independently in the interests of the public.

In regard to funds, he suggested the imposition of a tax on land values. They must lay down, as already stated by him, a programme of what should be done to create a better order of humanity in the town, and create public opinion in favour of it, by which they would be able to induce the government to accept their view.

10. For a King's Favour¹

King Amanullah Khan of Afghanistan has returned from his long journeying and has been welcomed back by his own people. From capital to capital of the countries of the West he went on his triumphal tour and everywhere he and his charming queen received a welcome such as the greatest of monarchs might well envy. A few years ago Afghanistan was almost an unknown kingdom, hidden away in the mountains, dependent on England for many things and not daring to offend even the Government of India. Today it has an assured international position and treats with other powers on a basis of equality. Much is expected of Amanullah Khan in the future, but if he did nothing more for his country's sake and belied the bright promise of his early deeds, even so his name is assured of inclusion in the roll of the great builders of nations.

1. 27 June 1928. J.N. Miscellaneous Papers, N.M.M.L.

Why was the king of a little mountain State so cordially and sumptuously welcomed by the great powers? Was it for love of him or his country or because of the charm of his gracious queen? All the world knows the reason for this cordiality. Afghanistan though small and powerless compared to the great European powers occupies a key position in case of war between England and Russia. In no other contingency is Afghanistan an important consideration. And because there is danger of war between England and Russia England has tried her utmost to win over Amanullah and, with a singular lack of tact, has at the same time tried to impress upon him the might of the British Empire. Every device was tried to win the King's favour and, fearful of Russian influence, every attempt was made to prevent him from visiting the Soviet Union. Offers of alliances, it is said, were made by England, and of loans on easy terms.

With what impressions Amanullah has returned to Kabul no outsider can definitely say. But even the outsider can see the indications and read the obvious. The frantic efforts of the British Government to prevent Amanullah from visiting Moscow failed signally. He went and during his stay there he did not fail to offer his tribute to the great man who has made the Russia of today. "Carrying a red wreath," a report says, "tied with the black and yellow colours of Afghanistan, he went down into Lenin's mausoleum in the Red Square and stood for a long time at the salute, gazing at the body of the man who first made human equality, and specially the equality of Asiatic and European, a living reality."

Wedge between two great powers Afghanistan has to make up its mind from which side danger threatens most. Apparently Amanullah has made up his mind for reports have it that having refused to be entangled into a British alliance he has entered into alliances with Turkey and Persia. And both these two countries, it is well known, have a definite understanding with the Soviet Union.

That the danger to Afghanistan from the British side is real and pressing and daily grows nearer is evident to every student of international affairs. About a year ago—on July 1st 1927—the military correspondent of the London *Daily Telegraph* frankly stated that British policy was to take an offensive spring forward from the Indian frontier. The best way, it said, "of countering any danger" was "by an offensive forward spring, rather than by any passive cordon based on infantry." And the best way to carry out this forward spring was by means of "mobile forces, mechanised and air." We all know what this offensive forward spring in the name of defence means. It means that the British Government will not wait for danger or an attack or

perhaps even a declaration of war. It means that England will herself take the initiative and declaring war on Soviet Russia will immediately sweep across Afghanistan on the military principle which dictated the German invasion of Belgium in 1914.

Preparations for this offensive continue apace. We have just been told that more money must be spent on the Indian army to make it thoroughly up to date in its mechanical and air equipment. Large air ports are being established and military roads and strategic railways on the frontier are being built. As soon as these preparations are deemed to be complete a slumbering India may wake up to the boom of cannon and the whirr of air fleets. We can almost hear the drums of war in the answer that Sir Austen Chamberlain has sent to the American proposals for the outlawry of war. After making wide reservations relating to the British Empire, he has expressly said that the proposed treaty will not apply to countries not officially recognised. The only great country not so recognised is Russia. No indication could be clearer of what British policy is aiming at.

With this background before us we can realise the significance of the welcome given to King Amanullah in London. Weak as his State may be comparatively, it is a factor of importance in the coming war. Even little Belgium could hold up the German armies for many invaluable weeks. And Afghanistan can make a great deal of difference to the carefully laid plans of the British General Staff. Hence the frantic attempts that have been made to gain the King's favour.

For us in India there is a moral which it were well if we understood and grasped thoroughly. If the little State of Afghanistan is a factor of importance in a war, how much more is the goodwill of the Indian people. If we but realised the true position we would see that in our dealings with England today we occupy the dominant position and can dictate our terms. Weak and powerless as we are, we can make all the difference in any war which England may indulge in to further her imperialist designs. To gain the favour of a king, England went very much out of the way and tried her utmost. But to gain the goodwill and favour of an outraged people, what can England not do?

11. On Ministers and the Like¹

"Politics", said George III of England, "are a trade for a rascal, not a gentleman." The remark was perhaps a little exaggerated. And yet all of us who dabble in this trade weary of it at times and feel disgusted with it. Not unoften we see others in the trade, sometimes in our own ranks, more frequently in the ranks of our opponents, for there is less of charity in judging those who are not with us, who seem to demonstrate the truth of the dictum of the English King. It is strange to watch the making of a politician. A doctor has to go through a laborious course of training before he can venture to practise his profession and no sensible person will go to a quack or one without training for his treatment. So does the engineer, the electrician or any other expert in science or industry. No one will dream of asking a man who is not a trained engineer to build a bridge.

But no such training is required of the politician, and every man is good enough for the governance of his brother men. Professors and other highbrows of their kind may write fat books on the science of politics. They may tell us of social problems which are convulsing society and suggest solutions; they may delve deep into the laws of economics, of eugenics and sociology and try to fathom the psychology of man, and discuss a hundred other matters of import to the leader of men. But the politician does not bother himself with these musty tomes. He is content with his fund of "common sense" and is quite sure that this is sufficient equipment for him to take charge of the ship of state. But, alas! common sense is often common nonsense and the ship founders frequently and brings disaster to many. But, strange as it may seem, repeated disasters have not exposed the politician for what he is or opened the eyes of the people to his utter incompetence. In highly advanced democratic England we see "Jix" of the Home Office behaving like a privileged buffoon attached to the royal courts of old, and Sir Austen Chamberlain making up in pomposity what he lacks in wisdom and sense, and of course our very own Lord Birkenhead who has such a pretty conceit about his own greatness and who is so lost in the contemplation of the grandeur that was F. E. Smith and

1. 10 July 1928. *The Searchlight*, Anniversary Number, 1928.

is now Birkenhead. Such are the gods of England! It is no wonder that Romain Rolland has suggested that instead of talking about the outlawry of war we should outlaw these men who make war. We should outlaw the politicians.

But why go to distant England for examples when our own country can produce the choicest specimens. Perhaps in the days to come we may have a museum of historical curiosities, something after the fashion of Madame Tussaud's² exhibition with its chamber of horrors, which alas! is no more. In this museum there will surely be exhibited models of many of our ministers and our executive councillors for the wonder of the coming generations. The teacher of youth in that happier age will show these sleek and shiny models to his students and tell them of the barbarous days of old when these people held sway and were charged with the direction of human affairs. He will point out that in those days not competence, nor wisdom, nor knowledge, not even the cruder qualities which capture the imagination of the crowd, were the tests for high office. Indeed they were disqualifications, and the greater and more abysmal the ignorance the more the chance of success in the race for office. He will tell them that truth and adherence to any principle were at a discount in this tribe of office-seekers and the prize usually fell to those who betrayed the cause they had stood for and gave the fullest evidence of inconsistency.

Every province of India will have its representation in this museum of curiosities. There will be the C.P. with its notorious example of a member of a party pledged to non-acceptance of office, casting his pledges and his principles to the four winds of heaven and developing overnight into an executive councillor.³ Other provinces will be there also but surely the largest and the most prominent part will be that of the United Provinces of today. Chief amongst his peers will be the gallant Nawab⁴ who presides so gracefully in frock coat and trousers over the domain of local self-government. Knight of many a plush carpet and a hero of green lawns, he pursues his primrose way from party to party. Not for him the straight and narrow path of knowledge. He disdains books and has not been known even by his intimates to read any except perhaps the lighter forms of literature to be found

2. A famous exhibition of wax works in London. Madame Tussaud was a French lady who escaped to London at the time of the French Revolution.
3. The reference is to S. P. Tambe, the Swarajist president of the Central Provinces Legislative Council. In October 1925 he accepted membership of the Governor's Executive Council without the knowledge of his colleagues and party leaders.
4. Nawab Sir Mohammad Yusuf, Minister of Local Self-Government in U.P.

at the bookstalls of railway stations. His greatest friends cannot accuse him of dallying with anything that concerns intellect or of displaying any measure of intelligence. On his own subject of local self-government he has preserved a virgin mind, and knowing as much about it as he does of the condition of Mars can give an absolutely unbiased opinion.

Another interesting model will be of the Nawab's new colleague, the noble raja⁵ whose conscience has convinced him that he must sacrifice himself at the altar of high office in spite of his opinions and convictions, in spite of his loudly declared views and protestations. The student of psychology will find him and his like an interesting study.

Many others there will be in this museum, and the future student will wonder at the strange dispensation under which wisdom and knowledge were specially lacking where they were most needed. He will wonder still more that any people should be so degraded or deluded as to tolerate even for an instant turncoats and ignoramuses. But if he has been a student of history he will know that such has been the fate of every country under alien rule. Evil flourishes thereunder and little of good. And he may recall the lines of a great poet of an earlier day about another land which suffered the agony of foreign domination:

"She stood before her traitors bound and bare,
Clothed with her wounds and with her naked shame,
As with a weed of fiery tears and flame,
Their motherland, their common weal and care
And they turned from her and denied, and swore
They did not know this woman nor her name.
And they took truce with tyrants and grew tame,
And gathered up cast crowns and creeds to wear
And rags and shards regilded — Then she took
In her bruised hands their broken pledge, and eyed
These men so late so loud upon her side
With one inevitable and tearless look,
That they might see her face whom they forsook;
And they beheld what they had left, and died."

5. Raja Jagannath Baksh Singh, deputy leader, U.P. Nationalist Party (which boycotted the Simon Commission) deserted his party when he was appointed Education Minister and cooperated with the Simon Commission.

12. The Proscription and Censorship of Books¹

Human nature is notoriously perverse. One has but to forbid a thing or taboo it to make it attractive. And out of the fear of taboo and its fascination arises the eternal conflict in man, the age-long struggle to escape from the wiles of the evil one. But, alas, escape is difficult for Satan peeps in at every corner and beckons to the unwary, and perhaps even more so to those who have been forewarned. Even saints are not beyond his reach for legend tells us that the holy *rishis* were sorely tempted by the *apsaras* of Indra's court, and all the great ones of the earth have had to go through the slippery valley of temptation. On this conflict the scientists of the modern age have built up the structure of psychoanalysis and we are told that all the ills that flesh is heir to arise from this conflict and repressed desire.

What then is to be done? Is evil to be allowed to flourish unchecked lest the very checking of it increase its fascination? For undoubtedly the sins of this world would lose half their flavour if they were not forbidden to us. It may be that their chief attraction lies not in them but in the red livery that society makes them put on. Discard the livery and see them for what they are worth—naked and unbeautiful and unattractive. But it is not easy to do away with the livery and its fascination. Centuries of taboo have engraved it on our minds and hearts and only a long and laborious course of instruction can right our perspective.

What then can we do? "The easiest way to overcome temptation" said Oscar Wilde, "is to succumb to it." A certain method, no doubt in a way, but a curious one and not to be commended.

But let us leave these high problems to philosophers and psychoanalysts and the like. I am concerned at present with the banning of books. The papers have recently announced that the Viceroy or the Home Member or the Governor-General and his whole Council put together have proscribed a recent addition to the "Today and Tomorrow" series. I have a soft corner for this series and have read and enjoyed a goodly number of its little books, and I am afraid I am a little prejudiced against the Viceregal crowd. My sympathies were therefore entirely with the book without knowing in the least what it contained.

1. J.N. Miscellaneous Papers, N.M.M.L.

This article, dated 6 March, appears to have been written in 1929.

With the perversity of human nature to which was added the perversity of the Indian politician I determined to read the book² in case chance threw it in my way. Subsequent researches however led me to the discovery that the book was largely a record of the adventures of the author in the brothels of Calcutta and from his ripe experience garnered in these surroundings he had judged India and prophesied about her future. He informs us that he encountered honourable members of Council in these haunts of his. Perhaps his experiences were confined to the pre-reform days; otherwise he might have encountered even bigger fry. For, may we whisper it? Those whom Viceroy and Governors delight to honour are seldom known for anything except ignorance and incompetence.

Presumably the government has banned the book to protect the good name of India. There was I believe a cry for the banning of Katherine Mayo's *Mother India* also. But I must confess that I see no logic or sense in this suppression of books. From the larger point of view I do not believe in the official censoring or proscription of books in any country, much less in India where the official happens to be a foreigner. But even apart from this, if India is to be protected from the evil effects of the book it should be proscribed in other countries. No one in India is likely to be misled by a journalist's account of Calcutta brothels and his deductions therefrom.

It is a dangerous power in the hands of a government: the right to determine what shall be read and what shall not. And it almost always fails to achieve its object. Those who wish to do so can usually get hold of the proscribed book. In India the power is likely to be misused and has been misused a hundred times. We have to be careful therefore lest one right use of the power is held to justify its misuse on scores of occasions.

I believe that Mazzini's³ *Essays* were long banned by the Government of India. A more flagrant instance of misuse of power it would be difficult to find. Savarkar's⁴ history of the *War of Independence* is another famous example. It is a brilliant book though it suffers from prolixity and want of balance occasionally. I had occasion to read it in Europe and I have often felt that a new edition, more concise and with many of the oratorical flights left out, would be an ideal

2. R. J. Minney, *Shiva or the Future of India* (London, 1929).

3. Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-72); revolutionary theorist of the Italian Risorgimento and of European nationalism.

4. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883-1966); suffered incarceration and internment 1910-37 for his revolutionary activities; later leader of the Hindu Mahasabha.

corrective to the British propaganda about the events of 1857. But I am afraid we shall have to wait for this till Swaraj comes.

Sometimes, I fear that even with Swaraj we may have to face a strict censorship. The spirit of puritanical censorship is evident enough in many quarters in India today and, much as we may dislike it, some of us who desire no censorship of books may find ourselves in a minority then. Let us hope that we shall carry on the good fight against suppression of books even then. Meanwhile let us not be caught in a trap and give up a principle simply because we happen to think that a book that the government has banned is undesirable.

13. *Slaves of the Gods*¹

"What is celebrity?" asked a French philosopher and he suggested an answer to his query — "to be known by those whom we do not know." Katherine Mayo may well claim a measure of celebrity or notoriety according to this definition. Little known in the continent of Europe, discredited and almost forgotten in her native country, many in England and India still remember her. In England, perhaps because she is supposed to have supplied a moral argument, which was difficult enough to find, for the continuance of British domination over India. In India for a different reason.

Probably no foreigner has aroused the anger and bitter resentment of the Indian people as much as Katherine Mayo. There is hardly an Indian of note, from Gandhi and Tagore downwards, who has not condemned her travesty of Indian life. Even those who were dragged in by her in support of her argument have turned against her and denied her. Yet, with amazing self-confidence, or of conceit and arrogance, she has gone her way and not profited by past experience.

I well remember my first reading of *Mother India*. It was on a hillside in Switzerland clothed in the beauty of spring flowers. And, as I read, a feeling of nausea overcame me, a sense of physical sickness, and I wondered if I was reading about my own country or of some wild and savage land unknown to me.

1. A review of Katherine Mayo's *Slaves of the Gods* in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 25 April 1929.

I claimed some knowledge of India. I had lived and wandered in many of her towns and villages, and had looked with unfriendly eyes on some of her old-world customs and traditions. Yet, the picture in *Mother India* was a strange and new one, and even when it bore any resemblance to a familiar landscape it was a distorted and coloured semblance. But the book was cunningly written and produced a strange first effect on its readers.

This much cannot be said of her short stories collected in this book called *Slaves of the Gods*. Her theme is the old one but the stories make poor reading. Occasionally they anger, sometimes they shame, but usually they bore the reader by their obvious sensationalism. Probably, if Katherine Mayo had not written them, few would have paid them much attention. They are of the kind which frequently appear in mission magazines meant to impress the virtuous and wealthy widows of the West in order to induce them to subscribe to mission funds.

There is little of artistry in them. The language is laboured and overdone and the well-known phraseology of Anglo-India, which has little to do with the language of the people, is used in order to create an Indian "atmosphere." In a jungle of degraded humanity—where religion is prostitution and rape on immature child-wives and infanticide, and the forcible suppression of vast numbers of "untouchables"—appear from time to time strong silent "sahibs" and "lady miss sahibs" doing gallant deeds of knight-errantry and bearing evidence of the nobility of the religion of Christ.

There are twelve of these stories and we are told at the beginning of each that "the narrative is taken from real life." We may well doubt the correctness of this statement as Miss Mayo has not proved herself a stickler for the truth in her previous book. But, even apart from this, it is difficult to understand how she could get the real facts of many of her stories.

One of the stories—"The Two Ranis"—purports to deal with the happenings in a princely *zenana* where secret conspiracies are hatched. How Miss Mayo could get the purport of these conversations and decisions passes one's comprehension. She must either be singularly gullible or singularly careless in mixing fact and fiction. The story of "The Two Ranis" is a remarkable one, bearing the impression of improbability in every page. It is difficult enough to believe that any occurrence corresponding to it could have taken place; it is not possible to conceive how any one could verify it even if it occurred.

Another story tells us of a man throwing out his girl-wife through the window into the street on her bridal night because apparently she did not come up to his expectations. Presumably Miss Mayo thinks

that this is not an uncommon occurrence in India, and stranger still, that a crowd would watch the girl lying with broken limbs in the street without help or comment.

A third story gives a graphic account of the killing of infant girls in the Punjab and the method of killing them is to leave them "alive" in a hedge of thorns. Why the guilty party should not adopt safer and quicker and less cruel methods we are not told. And when, by a freak of chance, a girl is rescued from the hedge just in time and grows up for two or three years, another attempt is made to kill her, but this time with a knife. The attempt does not succeed as the father, who is a leading *vakil* and the son of a big *zamindar*, repents at the last moment. Really, some of Miss Mayo's informants must be the direct descendants of Ananias.

But the story which gives us a real insight into Miss Mayo's mind and makes her *bonafides* suspect, is "The Widow". We are told of the troubled days of 1921 when "in the very streets of the capital (Calcutta), secret plotters and killers vied with open assassins to terrorize all who opposed the will of the new-made saint, Gandhi, then at the zenith of his power. And though the saint himself continued to preach nonviolence, his speech, day by day, was the speech that breeds hatred and destruction and drives simple folk to the spilling of blood." Young men, who preach the boycott of foreign cloth, are said to curse the widow for having worn a Manchester *sari* and, for fear of the curse, she discards her only covering and hangs herself till she is dead.

No newspaper had apparently hinted at this terrible consequence of the boycott movement, none of the many opponents of the boycott had mentioned it anywhere, but Miss Mayo has succeeded in obtaining the details of this tragedy of a Bengal village.

Such amazing stories make Miss Mayo suspect. Her object is not a *bonafide* one, in spite of her protestations. She appears to be full of malice against that unhappy creature, the Indian politician, and she is prepared to give credit to the wildest of accusations against him.

She had material enough in India to make out a terrible indictment, but she has spoilt her case by deliberate mis-statement and wilful exaggeration, and most people who were prepared to listen to her are today suspicious of her statements. Her twelve stories are full of these exaggerations and any person with a knowledge of India can point out the obvious inaccuracies. But, even if most of the stories are mainly true, some of them at least cannot be typical.

It matters little, however, what Miss Mayo says or writes. India will carry on in spite of her. But what does matter to every Indian is the

condition of men and women in this country and the many evil customs we suffer from. Katherine Mayo may indulge in exaggerations and falsehood, but there can be no doubt that the real sting in what she writes lies in the kernel of truth that it contains. This hurts.

For the fact is that Indian society is in a bad way and our old and outworn customs cling to us like the Old Man of the Sea and are as difficult to be rid of. Why we are crushed under this weight of custom and tradition is another matter. Miss Mayo would have us believe that it is all due to the Hindu religion, to our "ancient code's inhibitions". Religion has much to answer for in all parts of the world, and India has certainly suffered enough from it. But other and more important factors go also to build the fabric of society, as Miss Mayo may find out when she starts to learn a little. The economic condition of the people has something to do with it.

Perhaps, some day, when a real history of India is written, we may be able to trace the development of these many factors, their reactions on each other and the tremendous effect of foreign rule. Unhappily, such a history will not be available to us for some time, for every such attempt is frowned upon by our "sahib rulers".

The history that has to be written will deal with many things. It will tell us of the strange fact that a society, which had dynamic elements of change and adaptability in it, became more and more static under foreign rule, of how the British rulers, themselves the representatives of what might be considered a more advanced social system, became the bulwarks of reaction and conservatism. Not directly interested in social progress in India, and not daring to take the risk of offending the conservative elements, they threw the whole weight of the State against reform. Hindu law, which was very largely custom, even adapting itself to changing conditions, became under their rule rigid and unyielding, only to be altered by the legislature. And every attempt to alter it thus was met with the active opposition of the conservatives.

But, to understand the problem of India in any of its aspects, we have to come back not to religions, as Miss Mayo imagines, but to her economic condition, to her great poverty and the causes that have produced it. For India is a strange medley today of the old and the new, having little of good of either and much of evil. Her social structure, her family system, are relics of feudalism and of an agricultural and pre-industrial age; how can they fit in with modern conditions? And yet modern conditions have proved no blessing to her as yet.

The industrial age has come upon her stealthily and deprived her of her old economy, but it has given her little to replace it. Industrialism has not meant wealth for this country or a higher standard of living or education, or better health, or spirit of cooperation, or the power of organization, or any of its other virtues. So, unhappy India, at the same time feudal and capitalist, agricultural and industrial, suffers from the vices and shortcomings of both and has few of their virtues.

Who can be responsible for this except the type of government that has ruled India for 170 years or more, and during this long period had the fullest power and opportunity to do what it chose, and yet has produced this starving and illiterate and miserable generation of Indians with sad and listless faces and sunken eyes from which hope has all but fled?

And the remedy for this lies not in the religion of Christ or in any other religion deluding the people into an acceptance of their present degraded lot by giving them hopes of the hereafter. The remedy lies in the religion of social and economic equality and, if the Hindu religion and Islam are not prepared to admit this principle in its entirety, then Hinduism and Islam cannot look forward to much of a future. It is only in a socialist state that one can look forward to freedom from oppression of one man by another or one class by another.

Social reform legislation is good and to be worked for and welcomed. But all the good legislation in the world will not make a man or woman a free agent so long as he or she is economically under another's bondage. It is this economic bondage that is the root cause of the troubles of the Indian woman and to the removal of this our energies must be directed. The joint family system of the Hindus, a relic of a feudal age, utterly out of keeping with modern conditions, must go and so also many other customs and traditions. But the ultimate solution lies only in a complete refashioning of our society.

Meanwhile, let us by all means attack each separate evil—*purdah*, which is fortunately disappearing, and early marriage and untouchability and women's illiteracy. The Indian intelligentsia has a heavy task and many have nobly essayed it. But there are far too many whose words are louder than their acts and who seek to cover their social obscurantism by pious phrases or by political extremism. They are gradually being found out and they must realize that political progress cannot be divorced from social and economic progress, and the choice lies between progress all along the line or stagnation and reaction.

The picture that Katherine Mayo draws of India is a false one. To her India spells sex and nothing more—our religion is the religion of

the phallus, our science concupiscence, our chief diversion sexual intercourse with immature girl-wives. This is a monstrous picture and it is easy enough to demonstrate its falsity and to retort in kind. It is easy enough to discuss the sex conditions and problems which dominate the western world and which have practically put an end to the family and the home and are taking the race to none knows where. That would be easy but it would serve little purpose. Let us realise that the beam in our eyes is a big one and try to cast it out. How will it profit us to know that the beams in others' eyes are also big?

MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE

1. On Police Atrocities in Banaras¹

Sir,

May I crave the courtesy of your columns to give publicity to what appears to me to be an amazing instance of barbarity?

About a week ago two Bengali youths—Anil Chandra Mukerji and Manindra Nath Banerji—belonging to the Gandhi Ashram, Benares, and doing *khadi* work, were arrested in Benares, presumably as a consequence of the revolver shots fired at a police officer² on January 13. They were kept in the police lock-up for two or three days and were then removed to the prison. Both were kept in heavy fetters. Later Anil Chandra's fetters were removed, but Manindra Nath has been kept in fetters, night and day, and they are heavy. No one was allowed to see Manindra Nath and when his people engaged a vakil, the prison authorities informed them that he refused to sign the *vakalatnama*. It was impossible to find out how far this was true as no interview could take place. A barrister, who did not require a *vakalatnama*, then applied to see him. He was permitted to do so. He found him in heavy fetters and when he proceeded to take instructions from him a police snorthand reporter wanted to take down every word that was said. The barrister left in disgust.

I am afraid my knowledge of the law is rusty and I do not know what is permitted to prison and police authorities and what is not. But it seems to me an extraordinary thing for a person who is not even an under-trial prisoner, against whom no charge has been so far framed and no offence specified, to be kept in fetters and denied an opportunity to instruct his lawyer properly. I do not know if this is a peculiarity of the Benares official hierarchy. If so, I would suggest to them a little trip to Soviet Russia to learn more modern and more humane methods of prison treatment.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Letter to the Editor, 21 January 1928. *The Leader*, 23 January 1928.

2. Jitendra Nath Banerji, deputy superintendent of police, C.I.D. was shot at Banaras on 13 January 1928. A. C. Mukerji and M. N. Banerji, belonging to the Gandhi Ashram at Banaras, were arrested on this charge.

2. To F. J. Ginwala¹

14 March 1928

Dear Mr. Ginwala,²

I am in receipt of your letter of the 17th February. I am sorry for the delay in answering it. I have been travelling about and out of touch with my correspondence.

I would gladly help the *National Herald* if I could but I really do not see how I can raise any money for it here. The usual custom is for us to go to Bombay for money and not for Bombay to come here. We are having the greatest difficulty in raising small sums for our daily Congress work. Besides the U.P. is very badly in need of a decent newspaper. But want of funds always stands in the way. We are a poor province at least so far as public work is concerned. The zamindars have the money but they have no desire to part with it, specially in these days of socialist talk. You will thus see that I am wholly unable to help the *Herald* with any money.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5/1928, p. 31, N.M.M.L.

2. A solicitor, and Secretary, Bombay Legislative Council Swaraj Party in 1928; had desired to start a newspaper, the *National Herald*, in Bombay.

3 To Kanhaiyalal Shastri¹

31 March 1928

Dear Mr. Kanhaiyalal,²

I have your letter with the manifesto of the *Sudharak Sangh*. I have read through this manifesto and I find that I agree with almost everything it contains. In some respects perhaps I would go further.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-39/1928 (Pt. I), p. 39, N.M.M.L.

2. Assistant Registrar, Kashi Vidyapeeth. Died 1932.

I feel that in all our attempts at social reforms the economic factor is forgotten. Social reforms would follow automatically with some measure of economic freedom of the individual, man or woman. The whole question of women's rights is one of women's economic freedom.

I often feel that the joint Hindu family system has done a vast amount of harm to our country and made most of our young men sheer parasites whose sole function in life is to live on others.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To Mahatma Gandhi¹

14 April 1928

My dear Bapuji,

We have just been shocked to learn from the papers about Maganlal Bhai's death. He was the last person I would have thought of in this connection. But somehow our strongest and healthiest pass away and the weak and the ailing remain. To you and the *khadi* movement his passing away must be a great loss. He had intended coming to Allahabad this month from Calcutta and we were all looking forward to seeing him here. But that is not to be.

We seem to be having a cup full of misfortunes. One of our best workers here, Anandi Prasad Sinha, the secretary of the district Congress committee and a member of the A.I.C.C. died last week. He went on April 13 for a National Week meeting to a village about 20 miles from here. After finishing the meeting he was in a hurry to return to Allahabad to attend the meeting here too. In trying to mount the railway train he slipped and fell and had his leg cut off. He might perhaps have lived on if he had been looked after properly, but he was neglected both by the railway people and the police and when at last he arrived in hospital here there was great delay in tending to him. To the last, with profuse bleeding going on, he kept on smiling. We have few enough people who do any national work now. They can be counted on the fingers of one hand. And the loss of one good worker is a big loss.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

1. Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 14710.

5. On the Death of Anandi Prasad Sinha¹

Sir,

You have already given publicity to the news of the tragic death of Syt. Anandi Prasad Sinha. To those of us who knew him and had worked with him the news came as a painful shock. He had been prominently connected with Congress activities in the city and district, was the secretary of the Allahabad District Congress Committee and a member of the All India Congress Committee. Indeed he died as he had lived in working for the Congress and the country. He had gone to Handia on April 13th to address a National Week meeting there and in his attempt to get back to Allahabad in time for the public meeting here the same evening he met with his tragic accident.

I am craving the courtesy of your space however not to mourn the loss of a valued comrade but to draw attention to certain facts connected with his death which must concern every resident of Allahabad. Anandi Prasad is dead and nothing that can be done now is of any use to him. But I am by no means sure that he would have died if ordinary precautions had been taken by the railway authorities and the police and prompt treatment given to him by a qualified doctor. I trust however that those responsible for rendering medical aid to victims of accidents in Allahabad will learn a lesson from Anandi Prasad's case and make better arrangements for the future.

Anandi Prasad met with the accident at Handia station. As he was trying to enter the 18.5 train from there he slipped and fell and one of his legs was almost completely cut off. The railway authorities and police did not help in any way. They did not think it was any concern of theirs. Indeed the guard objected strongly to Anandi Prasad being brought by that train to Allahabad. No step was taken, so far as I know, by any official to send a telegram to Allahabad to summon medical aid or to have it ready. A fellow passenger and some students did all they could for Anandi Prasad. One of them sent a telegram to the police at the Allahabad city station. On arrival at the city station they found however that no arrangements had been made. An officious policeman was more interested in taking down statements than in rendering any help to Anandi Prasad who was bleeding profusely and for whom every minute's delay was vital.

1. Letter to the Editor, 20 April 1928. *The Leader*, 23 April 1928.

He was carried to the Colvin Hospital. He arrived there at about 8 p.m. or soon after. There were no qualified doctors there and the compounders present took little interest in the case. Apparently they did not even take the trouble to fetch a doctor. Meanwhile some of Anandi Prasad's friends learning of the sad news had turned up. Finding that the compounders were a hopeless lot and no one was attending to the patient, they went in search of doctors. The assistant surgeon, who lives in the hospital compound, was unfortunately away in the civil station attending to an urgent case, the sub-assistant surgeons were in their respective houses, one I believe in Lukerganj. A telephone message was sent to Pandit Motilal Nehru who immediately telephoned to the Civil Surgeon. The Civil Surgeon promised to attend to the case. He telephoned to the hospital but as it happened there was no member of the hospital staff in the office to receive the message. A friend of ours who was present went to the telephone and was told by the Civil Surgeon to find out Dr. Mukerji or the sub-assistant surgeon. The Civil Surgeon apparently thought that he was addressing the compounder. On Pandit Motilal Nehru again telephoning to the Civil Surgeon he decided to come round himself.

Meanwhile attempts were being made to trace the sub-assistant surgeons. This was not an easy matter. When the house of one of them was found a lady came out and first stated that he was in and later that he was not at home. The other sub-assistant surgeon apparently carries on private practice and usually sits in a chemist's shop. He was not to be found there. He was at last found at his house and asked to come to the hospital immediately. He did come but on arrival discovered that he had left his spectacles at home and so he could not see properly.

The spectacles and the Civil Surgeon arrived almost simultaneously. The Civil Surgeon instead of attending to the patient immediately spent some minutes in conversing with his staff and in expressing his displeasure at the person who had telephoned to Pandit Motilal Nehru. The Civil Surgeon and the sub-assistant surgeon's "eyes" arrived at about 9.15 p.m. Thus Anandi Prasad lay in the hospital for over an hour without being attended to. Till about 9 he was quite cheerful but gradually the great loss of blood began to tell and he began to sink. The Civil Surgeon left at about 10.30 p.m. and the sub-assistant surgeon soon after. Anandi Prasad died at about 3 a.m.

The facts stated above need no comment and the moral is obvious. It seems to me that the railway authorities and the police were grossly negligent and the arrangements at the Colvin Hospital for emergency cases are as inefficient as they can well be. The Municipal Board is

supposed to be in charge of the hospital although so far as I am aware it has seldom interfered with the internal management. The chronic disease of paucity of funds always pursues it. 'But whatever the reason may be it is a scandalous state of affairs that Allahabad should not have a place where an Indian victim of an accident can be attended to promptly and efficiently. The Civil Hospital, meant almost solely for European patients, suffers from none of the defects and deficiencies of the Colvin Hospital. It is, as every hospital should be, thoroughly up to date. But the Indian has to go to the Colvin and Indian life is cheap.

I trust the Municipal Board will enquire into the matter and will take immediate steps to remedy these defects.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. To Ratanlal Bhatia¹

4 May 1928

Dear Sir,²

I thank you for your letter of the 19th April. With much that you say I am in agreement. You have referred to a number of important aspects of the national problem and any attempt by me to deal with them in the course of this letter will result in my writing a long essay on the subject. I am afraid I cannot do that at present.

I agree with you that we should not have a mentality which believes in self-suffering more than on putting pressure on the opponent. As a matter of fact however this is an academic question. Individuals may or may not believe in it but political organisations cannot be run and have not been run in the past on this basis. The *hartal* to which you object is really a form of demonstration which involves the very minimum of sacrifice. The mourning processions of protest against the Simon Commission can hardly be looked upon as anything but aggressive protest.

Few people rule out violence on moral grounds. Many might prefer nonviolent efforts but if at any moment they feel that violence has

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-25/1928, p. 1, N.M.M.L.

2. A resident of Lahore.

a better chance they would undoubtedly adopt it. It is a question of expediency more than of anything else. I do not personally think that it is possible for us to organise any efficient militia on military lines. In a military sense it would be utterly useless. But every attempt to organise a body of people is good in so far as it makes them an organised unit for action. Therefore I am certainly keen on efficient organisation of volunteers. Perhaps you know that the Hindustani Seva Dal was started with this object.

The military strength of any state today is so great that it can only be upset by an equally strong or stronger military organisation. Volunteers and trained militia men cannot face it. But there are other ways of attacking a state and of paralysing a state. All these depend on organisation. The possession of a few rusty swords or guns or the use of them does not make the slightest difference to anybody in these days of highly mechanised ways of warfare. It is obvious that we cannot produce an aeroplane corps or a tank corps in our militia. So long as we cannot do that we are negligible in a military sense.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit¹

Hubli
24 May 1928

Nan dear,

I am on my way South. I have had no news² of Ranjit for 3 days now but as the last news was good I hope all is well. The arrival of father and Pratap must have cheered Ranjit and that is always the herald of victory over the enemy.

I have been carried about from place to place like a performing animal and made to hold forth. It is hateful. Day before yesterday I performed at Poona—yesterday at Dharwar and later the same day at Hubli. Apart from these public performances there are private rehearsals and I find little time to think even. I am supposed to deliver

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. Ranjit Pandit was suddenly taken ill in Mussoorie. Motilal Nehru and Pratap, Ranjit's brother, went there to see him.

the presidential address at the Kerala Provincial Conference day after tomorrow. I tried to jot down something in the train but it shook so much that it was difficult to hold on to the pen or paper! It was not easy even to read or think. So I gave up the attempt. I have to face the same railway, the M. & S.M. Ry, again this afternoon in going to Mysore. From Mysore I go by car through, I am told, very beautiful scenery. So the presidential address will remain in the head.

At Belgaum I met a holy one who is converting thousands of the Goanese to Hinduism. Perhaps you may have read about him in the papers. Here today I visited an even holier person—a regular saint who is visited by crowds from distant provinces. He is said to be about 100 years old and he looked this age. He was very gracious to us and insisted on giving all manner of *prasad* but fortunately he did not treat us as he treated some others. The latter washed his feet and carefully took away the water probably for drinking. They also ate and drank out of the leavings of the holy one. I am afraid even the holy one could not have made me indulge in these disgusting barbarities, but he did not try.

I hope to spend 4 days in touring about Malabar and the Ghats. I should have liked to spend at least a week or more but I am so rushed and have to be back in Allahabad. I am therefore missing a chance which may not occur again.

Love

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

8. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit¹

Mangalore
31 May 1928

Nan dear,

I arrived here from Cannanore today. Cannanore has a lovely sea front, partly beach and partly rock. I liked the place. It was a very pleasant change after unlovely and insanitary Calicut. I had a terrible experience yesterday at Cannanore. I was told that there was going to be a procession in my honour. I protested vigorously but in vain. The municipality having refused by the casting vote of the chairman to give me an address, it became a matter of honour for the people

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

to parade me about and present me with an address of their own. So I had to give in. Imagine my horror when I heard the strains of music—it is a travesty to call it music—something between a third class band and a *Shehnai*. But worse was to follow. A baby elephant appeared on the scene and was made to follow our carriage. It appeared that the elephant had been borrowed for the afternoon from a travelling circus. The elephant babe however refused to give in to man-made schemes and would not take his proper place in the procession. Ultimately he agreed to follow at the tail end far from everyone else.

I had to address two meetings, one of them meant exclusively for Mohamadans. It was very difficult to address the latter—English was not understood by any and only a dozen or so knew a little Hindustani. Ultimately I spoke in Hindustani and was translated—very badly—in Malayalam.

I do not know if I succeeded in convincing the intelligentsia of Cannanore by what I said at the meeting. But I created a great impression on them by another feat. I went to an Indian club in the evening and managed to beat the best player there at billiards.

Mangalore is a delightful place. All the houses are hidden by palm groves. It is built in the hollow of a cup with the sea on one side of it—I had a look at the hollow from one of the surrounding ridges and imagine my amazement to see practically no signs of houses. A whole city of 50000 or 60000 lay underneath and it was almost invisible. All one could see were groves of cocoanut palms and other trees. But there is no good beach here. The sea is some distance from the city. Within twenty minutes my engagements begin here. A small worker's meeting—the unveiling of Swami Shraddhanand's picture—a public meeting and address—an at-home at a club here—and later in the night I have to attend a benefit performance of a Canarese play. I won't understand a word of it but as the show is being given in aid of the Hindustani Seva Dal I have to put in an appearance.

Tomorrow we start by car at 4.30 a.m. and after wandering about the Ghats, lecturing at various odd places—paying a visit to a very holy gentleman—I reach the railway line at about midnight. The next day we shall again travel by car and train and there are several meetings finishing up with the night's stay at Bagalkot. The next day at Bijapur and then I rush back to Kalyan and Allahabad.

Love

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

9. To Alokandanda Mahabharati¹

10 July 1928

Dear Friend,²

I have received your letter of the 25th June and I have read it with great interest. I am afraid it is a little difficult to discuss the vital problems in the course of the letter.

You object to my criticising religion. I do so not because religion in its real sense is bad but because it has come to mean for the majority of people dogmatism and bigotry and want of reason.

In regard to the rich it is not a question of exterminating them. It is a question of putting an end to a system which tolerates so much inequality and poverty.

I have no doubt that India can be independent even before the old economic order changes. I should like both events to happen as soon as possible. But in case one precedes the other it will help the happening of the other. The figures³ you have given for the U.S.A. expenditure on war services appear to me to be very wrong. I have no means of checking them at present.

I thank you for the two little books that you have sent me. I shall read them with interest and pleasure.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(ii)/1928, p. 85, N.M.M.L.
2. Of Arunachal Mission, Deoghar, Bihar.
3. Alokand had stated in his letter: "Britain spends 67% of her national income on war, past and present, the U.S.A. 80%."

10. To W. P. Ignatius¹

10 July 1928

My dear Ignatius,²

I have your letter of the 4th July and am glad to note that you are interesting yourself in Hindi *prachar*. I wish you all success. I am

1. A.I.C.C. File G-40(ii)/1928, p. 80, N.M.M.L.
2. A propagandist for Hindi in south India under the auspices of Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha.

afraid however that I cannot possibly go down to South India nor hold forth on Hindi at various places. Firstly, I could not find the time. Secondly, to be quite honest with you I would not have much inclination. Not that I do not think Hindi *prachar* important but just at present my mind is full of other things. Thirdly, my Hindi is of a kind which will not be understood by most of your Hindi-speaking friends in Madras with the result that I shall succeed in scaring away more people than I attract. You will therefore I hope excuse me.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit¹

Savoy Hotel
Mussoorie
19 July 1928

Nan dear,

I have just heard of your cable from Port Said. So you have not only survived the perils of the Indian Ocean but have also faced and conquered the terrors of the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. I hope you are having well-earned rest in the more peaceful Mediterranean.

I came here day before yesterday. Kamala has been keeping well. She is much better than she was when I saw her last in spite of Butcher.² So I propose leaving her here for the rest of the summer. I shall be here for a week more.

You will be in London when this reaches you, busy and terribly occupied with the social functions to which Ranjit was looking forward. I envy you and Ranjit your youth and *joie de vivre* and hope that you will have a thorough good time. I am too old in mind if not in body to feel the ecstasy; too much a sufferer from what a Frenchman once called *la maladie des desastreuses*; life's dark corners have cast a shadow over me although I am glad to say that they have not enveloped me.

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. A physician at Mussoorie.

I have just received a notice from Agarwala to say that the club³ has been shifted to Gopi Nath Kunzru's⁴ house.

Love

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

3. Started by young Indian army officers.

4. Leading advocate of Allahabad; son of Pandit Ajudhianath.

12. To Subhas Chandra Bose¹

11 August 1928

My dear Subhas,

I am informed that a gang of men belonging to a big contractor working in the East Indian Railway was present very near the place where the Belur accident² took place. I am further told that many of these men are in a position to give relevant and important evidence in regard to the accident. Some of the facts as stated by them are as follows:—

The railway line was in good order when the train came. The permanent way had in no way been tampered with.

Secondly, that the villagers from the neighbouring villages were not permitted by the railway authorities to approach the scene of the disaster. In fact it is even stated that they were fired upon to drive them away. It is further stated that the casualties were very great.

I am giving this information to you for what it is worth. You may make enquiries yourself among these men who I believe are still working on the line somewhere not far from the place of the accident. The contractor is of course a very timid gentleman afraid of losing the big contract he has got. Nothing can be expected of him.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(ii)/1928, p. 43, N.M.M.L.

2. 21 passengers were killed in a railway accident at Belur on 8 July 1928.

13. To Biswanath Mukerji¹

27 September 1928

Dear Dr. Mukerji,

I received your telegrams at Calcutta and sent you a reply requesting you to send a full account here. I am leaving tomorrow to fulfil an old engagement at Lakhimpur. I hope to return by the 1st October.

I have been thinking here as to what should be done. It is obvious that after the disgraceful attack on you matters cannot be allowed to rest where they are. The only thing that strikes me that we can do is to visit the domains of the Raja of Tamkohi² and face him in his own zamindari. But this will take several days and hence my difficulty as I do not see how I can find several days in the immediate future. I shall meet some friends at Lakhimpur and shall consult in the matter. I shall then write to you and if possible go over to Gorakhpur for a day or two in October.

I hope you are better now and have recovered from the assault.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(i)/1928, p. 103, N.M.M.L.

Also used as defence exhibit No. 202 (56) in the Meerut Conspiracy Case.

2. A taluqdar with large estates in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

14. On Violence at Tamkohi¹

Sir,

Some time ago the papers contained report of a brutal assault on Dr. Biswanath Mukerji near Tamkohi in Gorakhpur district. Dr. Mukerji is a member of the All India Congress Committee and a leading public man of Gorakhpur and the assault was deeply resented not only by his friends and acquaintances but by the public at large. I had occasion

1. Letter to the Editor, *The Leader*, 29 October 1928.

to visit Gorakhpur some time after. On my return I addressed two letters to the Raja of Tamkoshi. I enclose copies of these for favour of publication. They speak for themselves.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

TO RAJA OF TAMKOHI

I

Allahabad
9 October 1928

Dear Raja Sahab,

You are doubtless aware that the reason for my visiting Gorakhpur last week was the occurrence which took place last month at Madhopur Buzurg when Dr. Biswanath Mukerji was badly assaulted and beaten with *lathis*. The meetings I addressed at Gorakhpur on Friday last and at Madhopur on Saturday were largely concerned with this incident and I expressed myself freely on the subject. I have no doubt that the purport of my remarks must have been repeated to you as some of your estate officers were present at the second meeting.

When I met you on Saturday afternoon I had little time at my disposal and besides I did not think it was necessary for me to start a discussion on the subject. I feel, however, that I owe it to you to write frankly so that you may, if you so desire, explain to me what your viewpoint is.

You will agree with me that it is an extraordinary and most undesirable occurrence for a public worker to be assaulted and beaten in a public meeting while he was actually addressing a meeting. There is no doubt that he was so treated and there is still less doubt that such an assault is a most cowardly thing and deserves the severest censure and punishment. Dr. Biswanath Mukerji happens to occupy a responsible position in public life, but, apart from his position, any such assault on any person is equally objectionable and cannot be tolerated. The only questions that arise are: (1) who was guilty of the assault and (2) how far the beaten party was to blame?

So far as the first question is concerned there appears to me to be sufficient testimony to establish not only that many of your employees were present at the meeting but that some of them at least took part in the assault. This has been repeatedly and publicly asserted and I am

not aware of any denial on your behalf. The enquiry conducted by a special representative of the *Swadesh* also establishes this as a fact beyond doubt.

If this is so, and I see no way of denying it, then the responsibility for the outrage must rest largely with your employees and nothing that may have preceded the assault can lessen this responsibility. It was the duty of your employees, even if they had been passive spectators at the meeting, to intervene and prevent any such occurrence. The meeting was being held in your estate and, morally at any rate, they were bound to prevent assaults. Inevitably such an occurrence was bound to affect your prestige and damage the reputation of your management. That was their duty as passive onlookers. How much more reprehensible was it, therefore, for these people actually to take the initiative and become the guilty parties themselves?

I am told that it is said on your behalf that Dr. Biswanath Mukerji was to blame because he had espoused the cause of an old opponent of yours, Rajdhari Rai, and also because he said something in his speech which was disrespectful to you. Granting all this, I must say that the excuses are about the feeblest that one can imagine. I can hardly conceive of any reasonable person advancing them seriously. Is it to be maintained that because of the two reasons mentioned above, Dr. Biswanath Mukerji ought to have been cruelly beaten? It is admitted that neither he nor any one on his behalf raised their little finger against those who assaulted them. The assault and the beating was all on one side.

But let us examine the two excuses mentioned above. I admit that Dr. Mukerji ought not to have mixed himself up in a private dispute between you and an old tenant of yours. I gather that he did not know much about this matter and merely took it up as an ordinary kisan versus zamindar matter. But in any event how this lessens the insult and injury of the assault I entirely fail to understand.

The second excuse is that Dr. Mukerji said something disrespectful to you. I do not know what statement your employees attribute to him, but from what I have heard from independent sources he said something to the effect that he was not afraid of you and did not care for you or for what you might do. The statement may have been uncalled for and wholly unnecessary. But is such a statement supposed to be a very terrible thing in Tamkohi? If so Tamkohi must be a very backward place indeed. It is a statement which I have made in different languages on many occasions in regard to many persons. To make this an excuse for an assault is to add insult to injury.

There is one other matter which seems to me deserving of attention.

The objectionable statement was made at the meeting. But before the meeting commenced a number of people armed with *lathis*, and I am told with lances, came to the meeting. Why was it necessary for this band to turn up at all in this way at the meeting?

It seems to me that the whole incident reflects little credit on your employees and the only right thing to do is to punish the guilty parties and to express regret to Dr. Mukerji. But that is for you to decide. In any event I shall welcome a reply from you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

II

Allahabad
24 October 1928

Dear Raja Saheb,

On the 9th of October, that is, more than two weeks ago, I sent you a registered letter, in which I drew your attention to certain facts and the inferences I had drawn from them. As these facts and the inferences brought little credit on your estate management I invited you to explain them or correct them. I have had no such explanation. Indeed you have not done me the courtesy of even acknowledging my letter. I can only conclude that you have nothing to explain or challenge and that my inferences are correct. But although you do not challenge my facts, I regret to observe that you have not the courage to take the only right action which a gentleman would take under the circumstances. You have neither expressed your regret for the brutal assault on Dr. Mukerji nor have you, so far as I am aware, punished the guilty parties who happen to be in your employ.

During my visit to Gorakhpur two public meetings were held to condemn this assault. One was held in the town and among the speakers were Syt. Shiva Prasad Gupta, the Raja of Kalakankar² and Syt. Gauri Shankar Misra. At this meeting the resolution of condemnation was unanimously passed and not a single person opposed it. I gather that the president of the meeting has informed you of this resolution. At the second meeting your employees, who were present in some numbers, were repeatedly given an opportunity to speak but they did not challenge or correct a single statement made.

2. Raja Awadhesh Singh (1906-1934); a leading taluqdar of Oudh who sympathised with the nationalist movement. Motilal Nehru died in his house in Lucknow in 1931.

I do not propose to write to you any further on the subject as I have other and more important work to attend to. But I must express my regret that any Indian, even though he be a big zamindar, should have shown himself so lacking in courage and fairness.

I am sending these letters to the press.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

15. To Syed Mahmud¹

B.N.W. Ry
On Way to Bettiah
15.11.28

My dear Mahmud,

I am on my way to the Bettiah conference. I would have liked to go through Chapra and have a glimpse of you but the B.N.W. train service is so bad that I decided, to save time, to go via Patna and Dighaghat.

Your letter was a very pleasant reminder that I am of sufficient interest to at least one of my friends for him to remember my birthday. I try to forget, unsuccessfully I must confess. It is not pleasant to get older and older and I am past the age when birthdays are agreeable or welcome.

Your birthday gift had not come when I left Allahabad. I am bound to like it coming as it does laden with your good wishes. You make me feel quite young with your gifts and presents!

Love

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

16. To Sri Krishna Sinha¹

16 January 1929

Dear Mr. Sinha,²

I thank you for your letter. I am afraid it is not possible for me to tour about and preside over conferences in various parts of the country. I propose to remain as far as possible at my headquarters and to tour only in connection with organisational work and not for delivering speeches. You will therefore, I hope, forgive me for not agreeing to preside over your district conference.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(1)/1929, (Pt. I), p. 51, N.M.M.L.
2. (1887-1961); lawyer of Monghyr who joined the noncooperation movement in 1920 and served long terms of imprisonment; Chief Minister of Bihar, 1937-39 and 1946-61.

17. To S.S. Rao¹

Allahabad

16 January 1929

Dear Sir,²

I have your letter of the 10th January. I have not insured myself in any company, Indian or foreign, particularly because I have not got the wherewithal to pay the premiums. Those that insure themselves should certainly do so in Indian companies. This is so obvious that it requires no argument.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(1)/1929 (Pt. I), p. 35, N.M.M.L.
2. An insurance agent in Nidadavole in Andhra.

18. To B.P. Singh¹

19 January 1929

Dear friend,²

I have your letter. I am sorry to know that owing to financial difficulties you are unable to do the national work which you have at heart. I do not know how you can be helped to get over these difficulties. It is not possible for any national fund to pay the debts of individuals and as for individuals it is not an easy matter for them to pay it either. So far as I am personally concerned it is not a possibility for me nor can I for the moment think of any paid position which might help you to pay off your debts. You must realise that yours is not wholly an individual case. There are many deserving young men who are more or less in the same position as you are and it is extraordinarily difficult to make provision for them. It is the system that is wrong and all you should do is to work for a change in that system.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(1)1929 (Pt. I), p. 67, N.M.M.L.
2. A resident of village Gainjahwa, Gonda district.

19. To R.S. Sharma¹

19 January 1929

Dear Mr. Sharma,²

I thank you for your letter of the 10th asking me to preside over the Punjab Provincial Political Conference. I presided last year over this conference and it seems to me utterly wrong for me to preside again. Apart from this fact I wish to try to avoid presiding over such functions this year. I shall however try to come to your conference at

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(1)/1929 (Pt. I), p. 59, N.M.M.L.
2. Vakil, Rohtak, Punjab.

Rohtak specially as the area is one which supplies large numbers of recruits to the army.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

20. To Mahatma Gandhi¹

Anand Bhawan
Allahabad
21.1.29

My dear Bapu,

Your letter has surprised me a little. Sitla Sahai has also written to me that he has been asked to give up the secretaryship of the U.P. branch of the A.I.S.A. as a result of some arrangement arrived at between Jamnalalji and me. Evidently there has been a serious misunderstanding somewhere.

My impression of the conversation I had with Jamnalalji was and is that the *status quo* should be maintained for the present but that Kripalani be asked to tour round our centres and select spots and make recommendations for the reorganisation of *khadi* work in the province. Jamnalalji certainly referred to the possibility of Sitla Sahai doing some other work if he was not suited to his present work. But as in my opinion the question did not arise just yet, I did not discuss it. Kripalani's name was discussed for the agentship, not the secretaryship. Jamnalalji however wanted me to remain as agent. I agreed to this. My only difficulty was that I did not consider myself a competent agent.

It does not really much matter what my opinion is on the subject. It is for you and Jamnalalji and Shankarlal to decide and we shall abide by your decision. I had not contemplated the possibility of Sitla Sahai leaving the secretaryship. I feel now however that there is practically no alternative. It appears that Jamnalalji and Shankarlal are both decidedly of opinion that Sitla Sahai is not fit for this work. If that is their opinion then he must go whatever my own opinion may be. As a self-respecting person he should himself resign.

1. Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 14990.

My own opinion of Sitla Sahai's capacity is different from Shankarlal's. I am fully cognisant of his failings, and specially of his remarkable capacity for rubbing people up the wrong way, but still I think that he is a very good worker. I am not aware of any one in my immediate circle of workers in the U.P. who can replace him with advantage in the A.I.S.A. The Gandhi Ashram probably can supply one or more good workers for the A.I.S.A. here.

Since Sitla Sahai's departure for Sabarmati I have had the greatest difficulty in doing A.I.S.A. work. It was largely owing to this that I first wrote to you last year suggesting my resignation from the agentship. Our annual report ought to have been sent nearly two months ago. But there is no one here who can draft it properly. I must do this whole thing myself after going into all the figures etc. December was a heavy month and I was away for the greater part of it. January so far has also been well occupied and I have not had any time to give to the drafting of this report. I do not want to be responsible for an office which cannot do its work punctually and yet what am I to do? To find some time is not so difficult. But to find enough time and the mood to go into the business side of shops etc. is difficult. If somebody could relieve me of this side of the work I should be very happy.

I hope you will go to Europe this year. As you know I am always in favour of your going. Father is not very keen on your going simply because he has made up his mind that I am going to be arrested within the next three or four months. I am afraid his love for me makes him take too tragic a view of the possibility of my arrest and to consider it an event of extraordinary importance. So far as I can see nothing wonderful will happen, only I shall have some peace of mind and freedom from worry.

Kamala is keeping tolerably well. I shall soon begin giving her Kuhne's baths. As for sun baths the Indian sun was not good enough for the Calcutta doctors! They have advised ultra-violet rays and given me a small apparatus to produce these rays.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

21. To T. Braganca-Cunha¹

22 January 1929

Dear Mr. Cunha,²

... I am interested to learn about the activities of the censor in Goa. Censorship is a peculiar annoying thing but ultimately it does not do very much harm. I shall be glad to give you every help in issuing any statements that you may like to make. I have written to the *Free Press* in Bombay about you and have also sent them your typed note. You can communicate with them direct or you can send me any material. I shall be glad if you will let me know from time to time what is happening in Goa. I may include some of your items in my Congress Bulletin...

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. A-4/1929-31, p. 75, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. (1891-1958); a leader of the freedom movement in Goa who founded the Goa Congress Committee in 1928 and secured its affiliation to the Indian National Congress.

22. To T. Braganca-Cunha¹

12 February 1929

Dear Mr. Cunha,

...I realise that conditions in Goa are different from conditions in other parts of India. But the difference in these conditions is largely due to the fact that Goa is a small enclave in what has for long been considered more or less foreign territory. Now that the feeling of common nationality is developing these differences will decrease.

The situation in Afghanistan is likely to develop² and to involve the big powers. This of course is full of all manner of consequences for India.

I hope you will keep me informed of developments in Goa.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. A-4/1929-31, p. 57, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. After the abdication of Amanullah, civil war had broken out in Afghanistan.

23. To the Times Book Club, London¹

Anand Bhawan
Allahabad
14.2.29

Dear Sir,

Please send me the following books:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| 1. R. M. Fox | : | The Triumphant Machine (Hogarth Press) |
| 2. Everyman's Library | : | Dictionary of Quotations and Proverbs |
| 3. George Bruson | : | A History of English Socialism |
| 4. Prof. Soddy | : | Impact of Sciences on an Old Civilization |
| 5. Godwin | : | Cain or the Future of Crime (Today and Tomorrow Series) |
| 6. Fenner Brockway | : | A Week in India (I.L.P.) |
| 7. Harold Lamb | : | Tamerlane |
| 8. Do Do | : | Chenghiz Khan |
| 9. A. W. Humphrey | : | The Modern Case for Socialism (George Allen) |
| 10. John Strachey | : | Workers' Control in the Russian Mining Industry (I.L.P.) |
| 11. Raymond L. Buell | : | The Native Problem in Africa (Macmillan) |
| 12. Valerin Marcu | : | Lenin; translated by E.W. Dickes (Victor Gollancz) |
| 13. L. W. Moffit | : | England on the Eve of the Industrial Revolution (P. S. King) |
| 14. Kropotkin | : | The Great French Revolution (I.L.P.) |
| 15. Do | : | The Conquest of Bread (I.L.P.) |
| 16. Arthur Ponsonby | : | Falsehood in War Times (I.L.P.) |
| 17. Upton Sinclair | : | The Profits of Religion |
| 18. Samuel Butler | : | Erewhon (I.L.P.) |
| 19. Jack London | : | Essays of Revolt (I.L.P.) |
| 20. Do | : | The Valley of the Moon (I.L.P.) |

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

This letter has been included as a sample indication of the wide range of Jawaharlal's reading interests.

21. Robert Tressell : The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists (I.L.P.)
22. John Reed : Daughter of the Revolution (I.L.P.)
23. I.L.P. Pocket Diary for 1929
24. J. A. Hobson : Evolution of Modern Capitalism (Scott)
25. M. H. Dobb : Development of Capitalism (Labour Research Department)
26. Borchardt : The People's Marx (Reformers Book Shop)
27. Bukharin and Preobrazhensky : A.B.C. of Communism
28. Edward Jack : A History of Politics (Temple Primers)
29. F. A. Jackson : The British Empire
30. Scott Nearing : The American Empire (Plebs)
31. R. W. Postgate : Out of the Past (Labour Publishing Co.)
32. Mark Starr : A Worker looks at History (Plebs)
33. Egerton : Short History of British Colonial Policy
34. A. Rhys Williams : Through the Russian Revolution (Labour Publishing Co)
35. General Lothomsky : Memoirs of the Russian Revolution (Fisher Unwin)
36. Leon Trotsky : Russian Revolution to Brest Litovsk (Allen & Unwin)
37. W. T. Goode : Bolshevism at Work (Allen & Unwin)
38. An Outline of Modern Imperialism (Plebs League)
39. F. Seymour Cocks : The Secret Treaties
40. S. & B. Webb : The Decay of Capitalist Civilization (Allen & Unwin)
41. Lenin : State and Revolution
42. The Jews and National Minorities in Russia (Vanguard Press N.Y.)
43. T. C. Wang : The Youth Movement in China
44. T. C. Woo : The Kuomintang and the Future of the Chinese Revolution (Allen & Unwin)

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| 45. Corbett and Smith | : | Canada and World Politics (Faber Gwyer) |
| 46. Isadora Duncan | : | My Life (Victor Gollancz) |
| 47. E. P. MacCullum | : | The Nationalist Crusade in Syria (Foreign Policy Association, U.S.A.) |
| 48. M. Phillips Price | : | Economic Problems of Europe (Allen & Unwin) |
| 49. A. Wicksteed | : | Life Under the Soviets (John Lane) |

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

24. To Duncan Greenlees¹

22 February 1929

Dear Mr. Greenlees,²

...I read your letter with pleasure. Unfortunately most of us know very little about Ireland specially since the Treaty with England. I have been trying to get books about her but all those that I have obtained seem to be in favour of the present regime. I shall be greatly obliged to you if you would arrange to send me *An Poblacht* regularly. Perhaps it will be more convenient if you could order the publishers to send it direct to me and I could pay them or you the subscription. I should also like you to recommend some recent books on Ireland...

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(ii)/1929 (Pt. I), p. 135, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

2. Associated with the Theosophical High School, Madanapalle, Andhra Pradesh.

25. To William B. Feakins¹

New Delhi
26 February 1929

Dear Sir,²

Thank you for your letter of the 16th January.

A visit to U.S.A. is one of the dreams of my life but circumstances have so far prevented it from materialising.

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. A resident of New York.

It is possible though not very probable that I may have to visit England in connection with the question of the Indian constitution sometime this year. If I do so I hope to include some parts of the U.S.A. in my programme. At the present moment, I am sorry to say, I am unable to give you more definite information.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

26. To Shambhu Nath¹

5 March 1929

My dear Shambhu Nathji,²

I have your letter of the 1st March. I am glad you are thinking of devoting yourself to removing the social evils in Kashmere. Some of them you mention are indeed very important and must be stamped out. I wish you all success. You must realise that it is not easy for me even if I had the time to do anything in Kashmere. Probably I would not be admitted there. Kashmere however is bound to be affected by the progress made in other parts of India. I shall follow your work with interest.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(ii)/1929 (Pt. II), p. 203, N.M.M.L.
2. Headmaster, D. B. School, Nangloi, Delhi.

27. To Thakurdas Pahwa¹

13 March 1929

Dear Mr. Pahwa,²

I thank you for your letter of the 4th March and the copy of your book *The Ring of the Indian Bell* which you have kindly sent me. I shall

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(ii)/1929 (Pt. II), p. 257, N.M.M.L.
2. A resident of Phillaur, Punjab.

read this book with pleasure though perhaps I may not be able to do so in the immediate future. It is a little difficult for me to find much time for reading. I do manage to get some time but when I do so I like to get away from purely political subjects and read better forms of literature. I shall however endeavour to read your book.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

28. To S.A.S. Tyabji¹

22 March 1929

My dear Tyabji,²

Your telegram. I do not exactly know what to send you. The rules of a kisan sabha are the ordinary rules of any organisation. So far as the object is concerned it should be a general one: something to the effect to improve the condition of the peasantry in every way so as to assure that they can get the full reward of their labour and may not be subjected to hardships and oppression. This is very vague. You may make it more definite or else you can have a separate programme. I have no idea what the condition of the peasantry is in Burma. What land tenures there are. Whether you have peasant proprietorship or a zamindari system. Your programme must necessarily depend on this. Above all an attempt should be made to have real peasant associations, not a paper show with a few city folk in it. Real work among the kisans can only be done by opening centres of work in rural areas where a fairly competent man can stay and work. This man can organise a kisan sabha, act as a village school master, help a little in co-operative activities, try to encourage the *panchayat* system in settling disputes and prove useful in many other ways. A small library with newspapers and a common room for villagers to come and sit is very desirable.

If you will let me know exactly what you propose to do and where, I might be able to offer some more suggestions.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-52/1929, p. 1, N.M.M.L.

2. A Congress worker in Burma.

29. To Father¹

March 29th 1929

Dear Father,

You gave me a letter from Sailendra Nath Ghose of New York which had been apparently forwarded to you from Calcutta. This letter gives the Kellogg Treaty as well as an abstract from the proceedings of the American Senate where objection was taken to certain reservations² made by Austen Chamberlain. These reservations refer specially to India. The extracts from the proceedings of the Senate are interesting. The Kellogg Pact was signed on behalf of India by Lord Cushendun³ who thus signed it twice: one signature standing for England, the other for India. Every dominion had its separate signatory. Why should Cushendun have any authority to sign anything on behalf of India? Why is this matter not considered by the Assembly? I think this question ought to have been raised in the Assembly as suggested by Sailen Ghose. It is necessary that the strongest objections be taken both to Cushendun signing on behalf of India and to the reservations of Austen Chamberlain. I suppose it is too late to do anything in the matter now. However I am returning S. N. Ghose's letter to you with its enclosures. When you have finished with it you can send it to our office.

Your loving son,
Jawahar

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. Austen Chamberlain had said: "there are certain regions of the world, the welfare and integrity of which constitute the special and vital interest for our peace and safety. His Majesty's Government have been at pains to make it clear in the past that interference with these regions cannot be suffered. Their protection against attack is to the British Empire a measure of self-defence. It must be clearly understood that His Majesty's Government in Great Britain accept the new treaty upon the distinct understanding that it does not prejudice their freedom of action in this respect."

3. Ronald McNeill, 1st Baron Cushendun (1861-1936); Acting Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, August-December 1928.

30. To N.K. Bannerji¹

5 April 1929

Dear Mr. Bannerji,²

I have your letter dated 25th March. May I point out that I am not a member of the Assembly.

Regarding your criticism of the Muslim League I think you were a little premature. As you must have seen soon after writing your letter the majority of the Muslim League actually stood against the communal tendencies of the others and even succeeded in carrying a resolution in the Subjects Committee. The League was however broken up by the minority at a later stage. So that it cannot be said that the Muslims in a body acted in a narrow communal way. It is also obvious that your statement to the effect that Muslims can unite quickly for their own objects has also been proved not to be correct.

The Hindu Mahasabha meeting at Surat as you will notice has gone back on its previous decision.³ I think that the Mahasabha has taken a very unwise step and in spite of its loud professions has demonstrated how intensely narrow-minded it is. Personally I do not worry very much about the happenings in the Muslim League or in the Hindu Mahasabha. I think in both of them a non-communal element is getting stronger. It is bound to win.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(ii)/1929 (Pt. III), p. 389, N.M.M.L.

2. A resident of Rangoon.

3. The Hindu Mahasabha at its session at Surat on 30 March— 1 April 1929 passed a comprehensive resolution opposing communal representation in legislatures and public services, and particularly opposing Muslim demands for the separation of Sind and the reservation of one-third of elected seats in the Central Legislatures for Muslims.

31. To Mathura Prasad¹

8 April 1929

My dear Mathura Babu,²

I wrote to you only a few days ago. I have however received your letter of the 5th April pressing me again to visit Behar. It is very difficult for me to continue refusing without appearing to be discourteous to you. But I do beg of you to excuse me. I know my own capacities and there is nothing I hate so much as not doing the work I am in charge of and meddling in other work. I cannot possibly go about touring districts this year.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(ii)/1929 (Pt. III), p. 429, N.M.M.L.
2. Associated with the Sadaqat Ashram, Patna.

GLOSSARY

Apsara	nymph
Begar	forced labour
Charas	drug
Daridranarayan	divine image of poverty
Dil khol kar	open-heartedly
Fakir	Muslim ascetic
Kaliyuga	according to Hindu mythology the last of the four ages
Karma	consequence of the deeds of previous birth
Kismet	fate
Maidan	ground—open space
Nautanki	ballad, opera
Nazrana	forced levy
Nihatha	defenceless; without arms
Panchayati Raj	village committee's rule
Panda	Brahmin whose profession is to look after pilgrims at shrines
Prachar	publicity
Ram Raj	equitable and ideal rule
Rishi	saint
Sabhyata	ethos
Shamiana	tent
Shehnai	musical instrument similar to the clarionet
Sudharak Sangha	reformers league
Tabligh	preaching that may lead to conversion
Taluka	sub-division
Tika	mark placed on the forehead
Tukkal	kite
Vakalatnama	letter of authority to attorney
Zenana	ladies apartments
Zulum	oppression

INDEX

(Biographical footnotes are italicized)

- A.B.C. of Communism* (Bukharin & Preobrazhensky), 426
Abhyudaya, 187
 Afghanistan, 29 & fn, 195, 232, 237, 298 & fn, 382, 387—389, 424
 ———, Amir of (Amanullah), visit to India, 29 & fn
 Africa, 58, 242, 327
 Agra, 375
 ———, Tenancy Act, 375 fn
 Ahmad, Muzaffar, 350 fn
 ———, Zahur, 93 & fn, 95, 97
 Ahmedabad, 13, 269
 ———, A.I.C.C. session at, 13
 Ainuddin, 109
 Ajudhianath, Pandit, 414 fn
Alice in Wonderland (L. Carroll), 223
 Ali, Maulana Shaukat, 51, 202 & fn, 203, 252
 Allahabad, 18, 35, 36, 38, 39, 45, 48, 49, 52, 54, 56, 71, 75, 83, 86, 88, 90—93, 95, 96, 116, 127, 142, 146, 148, 151, 161, 168, 174, 175, 181, 183, 199, 217, 281, 283, 286, 291, 321, 333—335, 337, 344, 354, 355, 361 & fn, 405—408, 410—411, 414 fn, 416, 419—420
 All Bengal Students Conference, 69, 188, 197
 All India Aryan League, 54
 All India Congress Committee, 70, 126, 134, 143, 174, 302, 406
 All India Forward Bloc, 46 fn
 All India Liberal Federation, 39
 All India Spinners Association, 175 & fn, 422, 423
 All India States Subjects Conference, 47 fn
 All India Students Conference, 320 fn
 All India Teachers Conference, 150
 All India Trade Union Congress, 149 fn, 295, 305, 313, 320 & fn, 324, 331 fn, 332, 342, 345, 346, 349 & fn, 352
 All India Trade Union Federation, 331 fn
 All India Youth Congress, 199
 All Parties Committee (see Nehru Committee)
 All Parties Conference, 35 & fn—40, 45, 48, 52, 53, 55, 57, 61, 62 & fn, 67, 71, 73, 76 fn, 78, 86, 87, 144, 162, 186, 203, 238, 239, 261, 262, 270, 289
 All Parties Report (see Nehru Report)
 Amanullah (Amir of Afghanistan), 29 & fn, 195, 298, 387—389, 424 fn
American Empire (Scott Nearing), 426
 Amritsar, 230
 Amsterdam, 129, 345
 Anand Bhawan, 45, 52, 335 & fn
 Aney, M.S., 12 & fn
 Angora, 383
Anjuman-Taraqqi-i-Hind, 110 fn
 Annapurniah, M., 167 & fn
An Poblacht, 427
 Ansari, Faridul Haq, 347 & fn
 ———, Dr. M.A., 15, 48 fn, 51, 52, 54, 62 & fn, 63, 134, 135, 174, 300, 337, 340, 341, 347
Anti-Imperialist Review, 145, 302 fn
 Anushilan Party, 74 fn
 Arunachal Mission, 412
 Arya Samaj, 54, 55
 Assam, 28
 Ataturk, Kemal Pasha, 195, 221
 Australia, 22, 42, 364
 Austria, 187, 237
 Avadh, 56, 70, 209, 375—376, 418 fn
 ———, Rent Act, 375 & fn

- A Week in India* (Fenner Brockway), 425
- Azad, Maulana Abul Kalam, 47, 48 fn
- Bagalkot, 165, 169, 173, 411
- Bahauddin, 91
- Bajaj, Jamnalal, 269 fn, 422
- Bajpai, Ramlal B., 346 & fn
———, R.S., 346 & fn
- Balaki Ram, 64 & fn
- Balakrishna, Dr., 364 & fn
- Baldwin, Roger, 125, 127, 130, 131, 137, 308, 310, 312, 313
———, Stanley, 87, 154
- Balkans, 26
- Baluchistan, 9 fn
- Banaji, M.M., 43
- Banaras (see Varanasi)
——— District Conference, 231
- Bande Mataram*, 75 fn
- Banerjea, Surendranath, 241 & fn
- Banerjee, Dr. Ajoy Chandra, 146
- Banerji, Jitendra Nath, 403 fn
———, Manindra Nath, 403 & fn
- Bangla Desh, 71 fn
- Banker, Shankarlal, 175 & fn, 176, 269, 422
- Bankers in Bolivia*, 140
- Bannerji, N.K., 431 & fn
- Bardoli, 240 & fn, 241, 247, 253
———, satyagraha at, 369
- Bari, Maulana Abdul, 68 & fn, 74 & fn
- Basu, J.N., 47 & fn
———, Mrinal Kanti, 331 & fn
- Beharilal, 88
- Belfast, 299 fn
- Belgaum, 410
- Belgium, 29, 237, 298 fn, 389
- Belur, 414 & fn
———, accident at, 414
- Bengal detenus, 127
- Bengal Federation of Labour, 320 & fn
- Bengal Liberal League, 39
- Bengal Ordinance, 60, 127 fn, 154
- Bengal Trade Union Congress, 331 fn
- Benn, Wedgwood, first Viscount Stansgate, 353 & fn
- Berlin, 135, 137, 283, 307, 308, 310
- Besant, Dr. Annie, 5, 76 & fn, 77
- Bettiah, 419
- Bhagat Singh, 322 fn
- Bhagavad Gita, 195
- Bhatia, Ratanlal, 408 & fn
- Bikaner, Maharaja of, 262 & fn
- Birkenhead, first Earl, 3, 35 fn, 59, 98, 154, 390—391
- Bolivia, 140—142
- Bolshevism at Work* (W.T. Goode), 426
- Bombay, 10, 20, 38-40, 43 & fn—45, 52, 53 & fn, 57, 60 fn, 81, 82, 85, 86, 88, 93, 95, 97, 162, 163, 187, 188, 238, 241, 245, 289, 290, 297, 302, 304, 309, 340, 351, 355, 357, 404 & fn
———, general strike in, 342
- Bombay Chronicle*, 358
- Bombay Youth League, 211, 320 & fn
- Borchardt, 426
- Bose, Sarat Chandra, 334 & fn, 338
———, Subhas Chandra, 43 fn, 46 & fn, 67, 70 fn, 74, 126, 161, 174, 199, 269 fn, 276 & fn, 277, 285, 331, 414
- Bradley, Benjamin, 336 & fn, 339, 343
- Braganca-Cunha, T., 424 & fn
- Bridgeman, Reginald, 108, 119, 132, 133, 135, 149, 298, 299, 308, 332, 335, 341, 342, 344, 348, 353—355
- British Empire*, (F.A. Jackson), 426
- British Expeditionary Force, 29 & fn
- British goods, boycott of, 12 & fn, 161 & fn, 162, 197, 227, 319
- British Indian Association, 105
- British Trade Union Congress, 332, 336, 344, 346
- Brockway, Fenner, 100, 369 fn
- Brunson, George, 425
- Brussels, 135, 137, 242
———, International Congress at, 308
- Buddha, Gautama, 196, 205
- Buell, Raymond L., 425
- Bukharey, J., 68 & fn
- Bukharin, 426
- Bulgaria, 237
- Bureau, Paul, 14 fn
- Burma, 28, 37, 429 & fn
- Butcher (physician at Mussoorie), 413 & fn
- Butler, Sir Harcourt, 239 fn
———, Samuel, 425

- Cain or the future of Crime* (Godwin), 425
- Calcutta, 28, 46 fn, 62, 69, 75, 88, 118 & fn, 126, 145, 152, 161 & fn, 175, 176, 203, 269 & fn, 281, 284, 285, 296, 301, 302, 304, 319, 320 fn, 331, 334, 336, 337, 344, 345, 355, 357, 358, 394, 397, 405, 415, 423
- Calicut, 386—387, 410
- Cambridge, 46 fn
- Canada, 22, 42, 130, 133, 364
- Canada and World Politics* (Corbett and Smith), 427
- Cannanore, 410
- Cawnpore, (see Kanpur)
- Cecil, Lord Robert, 21, 161
- Chagla, M.C., 347 & fn
- Chakravarti, Harikumar, 74 & fn
—, K.C., 347 & fn
- Cnamanlal, Dewan, 128 & fn, 348
- Chamberlain, Sir Austen, 26, 154, 389—390, 430 & fn
- Champaran, satyagraha at, 4 fn
—, Political Conference at, 263
- Chandni Chowk (Delhi), 319
- Chapra, 419
- Chatterji, B.C., 334 & fn, 337
- Chattopadhyaya, Virendra, 69 & fn, 70 fn, 117 & fn, 132, 134, 142, 145, 147, 150 & fn, 151, 295, 296, 299—302, 308, 310, 344
- Chaturvedi, Banarsidas, 150 & fn
- Chengiz Khan* (Harold Lamb), 425
- China, 12 & fn, 15 fn, 21, 27, 59, 133, 154, 163, 185, 193, 229, 236, 242, 245, 295, 372, 383
- Chintamani, C.Y., 48 fn, 88 & fn
- Citrine, Walter, first Lord, 348 & fn, 349, 353
- Civil Liberties in Russia* (Roger Baldwin), 310
- Cocks, F. Seymour, 426
- Colombo, 2, 182
- Comintern, 250
- Commonwealth, British, 22, 26, 58, 84, 194, 253, 254
- Communist Party of India, 321 fn
- Congress, 167 & fn
- Congress, Indian National, 12—13, 15, 17, 25, 30, 35, 39, 42, 46, 51, 54 ft
- Congress, declares independence, 3, 5, 16
—, session at Calcutta, 241, 269 fn, 275 fn, 277, 304, 317
—, session at Madras, 1, 3, 8 & fn, 10, 15 fn, 20, 23, 24, 25, 38, 77, 229, 230, 236, 270 & fn, 276 fn, 277
- Congress Socialist Party, 320 fn
- Connaught, Duke of, 20 & fn
- Conquest of Bread* (Kropotkin), 425
- Conspiracy at Meerut* (Lester Hutchinson), 346 fn
- Constantinople, 275
- Cook, A.J., 133 & fn, 138
- Council, Imperial Legislative, 4 fn
- Crerar, Sir James, 317 & fn, 326—328
- Curzon, first Marquis, 364
- Cushendun, first Lord, 430 & fn
- Cuttack, 46 fn
- Czechoslovakia, 26, 237
- Daily Herald*, 341 fn
- Daily Mail*, 317
- Daily Telegraph*, 388
- Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha, 412
- Damascus, 190
- Dange, S.A., 350 fn
- Dara, Gurdit Singh, 108 & fn
- Das, C.R., 13 fn, 46 fn, 74 fn, 234
- Das, Taraknath, 307, 311
- Datta, Dr. Bhupendranath, 76 & fn, 213 fn, 281, 333
- Daudi, Maulana Shafi, 51 & fn, 252
- Daughter of the Revolution* (John Reed), 426
- Dayal, Parmeshri, 369
- Delhi, 22, 23, 30, 31, 35 & fn—38, 40, 53, 68, 72, 73, 74, 82, 84, 93, 102, 129, 175, 230, 271, 318—320, 331, 338
—Provincial Conference, 251
- Desai, Mahadeva, 50
- Desh Bhagat*, 121 & fn
- Decay of Capitalist Civilization* (S. & B. Webb), 426
- Deoghar, 412
- De Valera, Eamon, 148 & fn, 149
- Development of Capitalism* (M.H. Dobb), 426

- Dharwar, 409
 Dickes, E.W., 425
Dictionary of Quotations and Proverbs (Everyman's Library), 425
 Digby, William, 364 & fn
 Dighaghat, 414
D'Indiscipline des mœurs (Paul Bureau), 14 fn
Doll's House (Henrik Ibsen), 362
 Dobb, M.H., 426
 Dominion Status, 11, 12, 21, 22, 41, 42, 57—61, 63 fn, 77, 251—253, 256—257, 261, 272, 274, 276, 281, 285
Dream and a Bluff, 98 fn
 Duncan, Isadora, 427
 Dunichand, Lala, 144 fn
 Dutch East Indies, 27
 Dutt, Abbil, 334 & fn
 ———, B.K., 322 fn
 Dutta, Kshitish Chandra, 71 & fn
- Economic Problems of Europe* (M. Phillips Price), 427
 Egerton, 426
 Egypt, 16, 21, 58, 59, 99, 133, 236
 Einstein, Albert, 314
 Empire Inter-Parliamentary Union, 130
 England, 13 fn, 21, 22, 46, 58—60, 87, 132, 133, 161, 163, 188, 209, 222—224, 227, 236, 243—244, 248, 256, 259, 262, 309, 317, 327, 351, 352, 355, 356, 364, 366, 381, 385, 387—388, 390—391, 430
England on the Eve of the Industrial Revolution (L.W. Moffit), 425
Erewhon (Samuel Butler), 425
Essays of Revolt (Jack London), 425
Evolution of Modern Capitalism (J.A. Hobson), 426
- Falsehood in War Times* (Arthur Ponsonby), 425
 Farrukhabad, 287
 Feakins, William B., 427 & fn
 Federation Malay States, 58, 140
 Fimmen, Edo, 125, 129—131, 312—313
Forward (Belfast), 299
Forward (Calcutta), 28, 127
Forward Bloc, 75 fn, 320 fn
 Fourier, Charles, 361 & fn
- Fox, R.M., 425
 France, 27, 29, 237, 262, 364, 386
 Frankfurt, 307 fn
 French Revolution, 4, 186, 391 fn
- Gadgil, N.V., 68 & fn
 Gainjahwa, 421 fn
 Gandhi Ashram, 175, 403 & fn, 423
 Gandhi, Shrimati Indira, 37, 49
 ———, Maganlal, 405
 ———, M.K. (Mahatma), 10 & fn, 13 fn, 14 fn, 17, 18 fn, 30, 31, 36, 37, 46 fn, 49, 97, 98, 130, 163, 164, 175, 176, 269 fn, 270 & fn, 276, 285, 319 & fn, 323, 378, 395—397, 405, 422
 Gangadhar, N.V., 283 & fn
 Ganguly, K.L., 68 & fn, 284
 Geneva, 26, 310
 George III, 390
 Germany, 187, 202, 237, 262, 364, 366, 382
 Ghose, Atul Krishna, 98 & fn
 ———, Aurobindo, 76 fn
 ———, Sailendranath, 346 & fn, 430
 Ghosh, Kishorilal, 320 fn, 339
 Gibarti, L., 125
 Gidwani, Choithram, P., 52 & fn
 Ginwala, F.J., 404 & fn
 Girdharilal, 339, 347
 Girni Kamgar Union, 304, 339, 340
 Goa, 424 & fn
 Gokhale, Gopal Krishna, 217
 Gollancz, Victor, 427
 Gonda, 421 fn
 Goode, W.F., 426
 Gorakhpur, 415, 416, 418
 Govindananda, Swami, 23 & fn, 54, 75
Great French Revolution (Kropotkin), 425
 Green, J.R., 58 & fn
 Greenlees, Duncan, 427 & fn
 Gupta, Chandra Bhanu, 347 & fn
 ———, J.N., 39 & fn
 ———, Jyoti Prasad, 347 & fn
 ———, Shiva Prasad, 74—75, 143 fn, 281, 284, 306—308, 312, 418
 Gurtu, Ram Narain, 335 & fn
 Gwynne, J.T., 110—111
- Haib Ullah, 91
 Hailey, Sir Malcolm, 120 & fn, 209

- Hardikar, Dr. N.S. 71, 75, 162, 170, 173, 285, 297 & fn
 Hasvi, Maulana Arif Husain, 68 & fn, 75
 Hatta, Dr. Mohammad, 129 & fn
 Hindu Mahasabha, 37 & fn, 38, 45 fn, 69, 76, 202 fn, 230, 238, 394 fn, 431 fn
 Hindu-Muslim tension, 1
Hindustan, 110 fn
 Hindustani Seva Dal, 23 & fn, 135, 143, 159, 160, 165, 168, 169, 171—173, 285, 322, 409, 411
 ———, Conference at Karnatak, 170
 Hindustan Socialist Republican Army, 322
History of English Socialism (George Bruson), 425
History of Politics (Edward Jack), 426
 Hobson, J.A., 426
 Holland, 27, 237
 Home Rule League, 39
 Home Rule movement, 13 & fn, 23 fn
 Hong Kong, 245
 Horniman, B.C., 76
 Hubli, 409
 Humphrey, A.W., 425
 Hungary, 237
Hurriyat, 68 fn
 Husain, Dr. Zakir, 67 & fn
 Hussain, Maulana Vilayat, 93 fn, 96
 ———, Muhammad, 93 fn
 Hutchinson, Lester, 323 fn, 346 & fn, 349, 350
 Hyderabad, 50
 Ibsen, Henrik, 362 & fn
 Ignatius, W.P., 412 & fn
 Imam, Sir Ali, 11 & fn, 43 fn, 83
Impact of Sciences on an Old Civilization (Prof. Soddy), 425
Imperialism and World Politics (Parker Moon), 139
Imperialist Danger (P.J. Schmidt), 152 & fn
 Independence for India League, 67—68, 70 & fn, 73, 74, 76—77, 143, 148, 151, 173 fn, 281—287, 290, 297, 302
 Independent Labour Party, 3, 138, 314 fn, 327
 India, 108 fn
India in Bondage (J.T. Sunderland), 311
 Indian National Army, 46 fn
 Indo-China, 27
 International Federation of Trade Unions, 348 fn
 International, Second, 138, 154, 155, 298
 International, Third, 154, 298
 Iraq, 29 & fn
 Ireland, 22, 99, 247, 272, 380, 427
 ———, treaty with England, 427
 Irish Nationalist Party, 84
 Irvin, Baron, later Earl Halifax, 273 & fn, 321, 323
 Italy, 26, 237, 364, 386
 Iyengar, A. Rangaswami, 164
 ———, S. Srinivasa, 5, 74, 84, 129, 134, 135, 289, 302, 332, 337, 341, 356, 357
 Jack, Edward, 426
 Jackson, F.A., 426
 Jallianwala Bagh, 363
 Jamshedpur, 60 fn, 199
 Japan, 27, 133, 237, 283, 364, 381
 Java, 274
 Jayakar, M.R., 43 fn
Jews and National Minorities in Russia (Vanguard Press), 426
 Jha, Prof. Ganganath, 151 & fn
 Jhabvala, S.H., 143 & fn, 339, 348
 Jhansi, 72, 150, 255
 ———, Rani Lakshmibai of, 255 & fn
 Jharia, 118, 297, 349 fn
 Jinnah, M.A., 37, 338
 Joglekar, K.N., 350 fn
 Johnston (American delegate to T.U.C.), 118 & fn, 296, 297, 349 fn
 ———, arrested at Jharia, 297
 Josh, Sohan Singh, 350 fn
 Joshi, G.N., 364 & fn
 ———, N.M., 128 fn, 297, 332, 336
 ———, P.C., 321 & fn
 ———, V.H., 347 & fn
 Joynson-Hicks, William ('Jix'), 59 & fn, 390
 Jubbulpore, 38, 230
 Jugantar, 76 fn

- Jugantar Party, 68 fn, 74 fn
 Juhu, 13 & fn
- Kabul, 388
 Kakkar, Kamta Prasad, 88 & fn
 Kalakankar, Raja Awadhesh Singh, of, 418 & fn
 Kale, V.G., 364 & fn
 Kalyan, 411
 Kanpur, 128, 260
 Karachi, 28 & fn
 Karnatak, 9 fn
 Kashi Vidyapith, 404 fn
 Kashmir (Kashmere), 428
 Katju, Kailash Nath, 361 & fn, 369
 Kaul, Kishan Prasad, 110 & fn
 Kelkar, N.C., 12 & fn, 38 fn, 347
 Kellogg Treaty, 430
 Kerala Provincial Conference, 234, 241, 246, 249, 410
 Khaliq, Abdul, 91
 Khaliquzzaman, Chaudhuri, 51, 56, 110
 Khan, Abdul Razzaq, 91
 ———, Hakim Ajmal, 103
 ———, Shafaat Ahmad, 93 fn
 ———, Sir Saiyad Ahmad, 50 fn
 ———, Vahid Yar, 169 & fn
 ———, Zafar Ali, 173 & fn
 Khilafat Committee, 69
 Khwaja, A.M., 93
 Khyber Pass Railway, 28 & fn
 Kidwai, Rafi Ahmad, 319 fn
 Kitchlew, Dr. Saifuddin, 45 & fn, 51
 Kobe, 28?
- Kombrambail, S.K., 68 & fn 75
 Kripalani, J.B., 175, 422
 Krishnanand, Swami, 54 & fn
 Kropotkin, Prince Peter, 425
 Kuline's system, 49, 423
 Kunzru, Gopinath, 414
 ———, Pandit Hriday Nath, 88
Kuomintang and the Future of the Chinese Revolution (T.C. Woo), 426
- Labour Party (British), 3 & fn
 Lahore, 19, 104, 128, 200, 273, 290—292, 408 fn
 Lahore Conspiracy Case, 75 fn
 Lajpat Rai, Lala, 72, 75 fn, 100 fn, 103, 105, 130, 273, 323
 Lakhimpur, 415
- Lamb, Harold, 425
 Langford James, 345 & fn, 346, 353
 Lansbury, George, 2 fn, 3, 138, 144
 Latif, Abdul, 91
 Leader, The, 17
 League against Imperialism, 8 fn, 125 & fn, 128 & fn, 130, 131, 133, 134, 136, 137, 145, 152—155, 295—297, 299—301, 304—309, 311—313, 317 fn, 325, 327, 336, 345, 354
 ———, World Congress of, 134, 146, 147, 306, 307, 309, 310
 League of Nations, 21, 26, 27, 161, 192, 379
 Lenin, 230, 322
 Lenin (Valerin Marcu), 425
Le Temps, 322
 Liau, H., 125, 128 & fn, 133
Life under the Soviets (A. Wicksteed), 427
 Lithuania, 26, 237
 Lokhare, B.G., 297 & fn
 Lloyd, George, 59
 London, 3, 22, 201, 202, 275, 283, 354, 355, 382, 388—389, 391 fn
 London, Jack, 425
 Lothomsky, General, 426
 Louis XVI, 58
 Lucknow, 56, 68, 71, 73, 100, 102, 104—108, 110 & fn, 114—116, 118—120, 252, 269, 270, 273, 309, 347, 418 fn
 ———, conference at, 72
- MacCullum, E.P., 427
 MacDonald, Ramsay, 2 fn, 3, 59, 94, 95, 138, 154, 299, 35?
 MacSwiney, Terence, 103 & fn
 Madame Tussaud's, 391 & fn
 Madanapalle, 427 fn
 Madras, 1, 2, 7 fn, 23, 24, 35, 86 fn, 135, 136, 159, 181 fn, 182, 229, 286, 289, 413
Madras Times, 364 fn
 Mahabharati, Alokanda, 412 & fn
 Mahila Vidyapith (Allahabad), 361—362
 Mahmood, Justice Syed, 50 fn
 Mahmud, Dr. Syed, 37, 50, 173, 340, 419

- Mahmudabad, Maharaja of, 56 & *fn*
 Malaviya, Pandit Madan Mohan, 48 *fn*, 88
 Malaya, (see Federation Malay States)
Manchester Guardian, 59
 Mangalore, 410—411
 Manilal, Dr., 150 & *fn*
 Marcu, Valerin, 425
 Marsh, Margaret A., 140
 Martial Law (in the Punjab), 190, 229
 Masud, Syed Ross, 50 & *fn*, 51
 Mathew, K.T., 47 & *fn*
 Maxton, James, 130 & *fn*, 131, 133, 138, 296, 298, 314 & *fn*, 327
 Mayo, Katherine, 1, 14, 394, 399
 Mazzini, Giuseppe, 394 & *fn*
 Meerut, 72, 117, 303, 305, 323 & *fn*, 331—334, 337—339, 340, 341, 343, 346—348, 351, 353, 354, 356, 358
 Meerut Conspiracy Case, 43 *fn*, 75 *fn*, 299, 300, 309, 332, 336, 341, 345, 346, 348, 349, 352, 358, 415
 Mehdi Haider, 92
 Meherally, Yusuf, 320 & *fn*
 Mehta, Jamnadas, 75 & *fn*, 76, 211 & *fn*
Memoirs of the Russian Revolution (General Lothomsky), 426
 Menon, Shrimati Lakshmi, 151 & *fn*
 Mesopotamia, 21, 29, 190, 229, 236, 242, 372
 Mill, John Stuart, 58 & *fn*
 Minney, R.J., 394 *fn*
 Mirajkar, S.S., 43 & *fn*
 Misra, Gauri Shankar, 187, 188, 418
 ———, Harkaran Nath, 110
 Mitra, Satyen Chandra, 338 & *fn*
 ———, Suniti Devi, 107 & *fn*
Modern Case for Socialism (A.W. Humphrey), 425
 Moffit, L.W., 425
 Monghyr, 420 & *fn*
 Moon, Parker T., 139
 Morocco, 4
Mother India (Katherine Mayo), 1, 394—396
 Moscow, 275, 305, 322, 384, 388
 Mozumdar, Dharendra, 116 & *fn*
 Mukerji, Dr. Biswanath, 144 & *fn*, 350 *fn*, 415—418
 Mukherji, A.C., 334 & *fn*, 338, 403 & *fn*
 ———, Dhan Gopal, 310 & *fn*
My Brother's Face (Dhan Gopal Mukherji), 310 *fn*
My Life (Isadora Duncan), 427
 Mysore, 44 *fn*, 410
Mysore Patriot, 168
 Muslim League, 11 *fn*, 37 *fn*, 38, 45 *fn*, 46 *fn*, 62 *fn*, 69, 76, 230, 238, 431
 Mussoorie, 49, 50, 62, 173, 174, 269, 409, 413
 Nagpur, 338
 Naidu, Sarojini, 39, 69 *fn*, 311
 Nambiar, A.C.N., 300 & *fn*, 311, 358
 Nanking, 275
 Naoroji, Dadabhai, 241 & *fn*, 364
 Nariman, K. F., 320 & *fn*, 338, 347, 358
Nationalist Crusade in Syria (E.P. MacCullum), 427
 National Trade Union Federation, 331 *fn*
Native Problem in Africa (Raymond L. Buell), 425
 Naval Disarmament Conference, 26, 27 *fn*
National Herald (Bombay), 404 & *fn*
 Nearing, Scott, 426
 Nehru Committee, 43, 44, 47, 50, 52 *fn*, 64, 71 & *fn*, 72, 252, 254, 262, 270—272, 276—277
 Nehru, Jawaharlal, 2—5, 7—9, 15 *fn*, 17, 20, 23—25, 30—32, 35, 36, 38, 40—45, 48 & *fn*, 50—56, 62, 67, 70—72, 74—76, 84—86, 91, 94, 96—102, 105, 116, 117 *fn*, 118, 120—122, 126—128, 130—134, 136, 137 *ff*
 ———, on All Parties Conference, 36, 37, 41, 44, 47, 48, 50, 55, 57, 60, 61, 63, 71, 72, 78, 174, 238, 244, 262; on communalism, 1, 9 & *fn*, 37, 39, 43, 45, 46, 51, 61, 64, 67, 71, 93, 181—183, 186, 203, 206, 207, 214, 225, 230, 233, 238, 258, 261, 431 & *fn*; on Congress presidentship, 51; on Dominion Status, 4, 12, 21, 41, 42, 57—61, 72, 77, 117, 143, 212, 223, 252, 261, 272, 273, 276, 277; on Gandhi, 10, 12, 15, 17—19, 37,

- 98, 121, 270, 423; on independence, 1, 3—6, 8, 11, 12, 16, 20, 41, 42, 57—59, 67, 72, 77, 87, 117, 132, 143, 212, 223, 252, 256, 261, 272, 274, 276, 277, 363; on kisans, 53, 75, 144, 184, 198, 209, 217—219, 224, 226, 229, 231, 240, 245—249, 253, 258, 259, 263—266, 284, 285, 287, 288, 297, 319, 365, 366, 368, 369, 371—378, 417, 429; on office acceptance, 211, 289, 302, 305, 306, 391, 392; on possible visit to U.S.A., 427, 428; on republican ideal, 7, 8; on rules of kisan sabhas, 429; on Simon Commission, 1, 2 fn, 3, 4, 8, 9, 35, 81—84, 86—87, 89, 93, 98—99, 101, 105, 120, 149, 206, 227, 240; on social evils, in Kashmir, 428; on socialism, 153, 155, 184, 191—193, 199, 206, 210, 212, 213, 222, 225, 246—248, 250, 264—266, 287, 371; on violence, 117, 118, 225, 245, 253, 323, 324, 326, 327, 372; on youth, 17, 92, 104, 105, 107, 114, 116, 120, 159, 160, 165, 171, 172, 179—181, 185, 188—196, 199—201, 203, 210—214, 320, 321
- , Kamala, 2, 37, 49, 50, 133, 148, 175, 176, 301, 302, 413, 423
- , Krishna (Shrimati Krishna Hutheesing), 2, 301, 302, 345
- , Motilal, 13 fn, 20, 41, 43 fn, 48 fn, 98, 115, 130 fn, 202 fn, 407, 409 & fn, 418 fn
- Nehru Report, 11 fn, 56 fn, 63 & fn, 143, 174, 202, 252, 270—272, 276 fn, 277
- New Delhi, 97, 320
- New Era, 379 fn
- New Leader, 100, 369 fn
- Nepal, 382
- New York, 283, 310, 383
- Nicaragua, 142
- Nidadavole, 420 fn
- Nimbkar, R.S., 350 fn
- Norway, 308
- Osterid, 298 fn
- Oudh (see Avadh)
- Outline of Modern Imperialism, 426
- Out of the Past (R.W. Postgate), 426
- Pahwa, Thakurdas, 428 & fn
- Pakistan, 64
- Palestine, 4, 314
- Pan-Asiatic Conference, 295
- Pandit, Pratap, 409 & fn
- , R.S., 133, 136, 144, 334, 337, 409 & fn, 413
- , Vijayalakshmi, 136, 144, 334, 409, 410, 413
- Pant, Govind Ballabh, 106 & fn, 107, 110, 111, 340
- Paris, 147, 275, 307, 308, 382, 383
- Patel, Vallabhbhai, 240 fn, 269 fn
- , Vithalbhai, 322 & fn, 323, 332 & fn
- Patna, 419, 432 fn
- Peoples' Marx (Borchardt), 426
- Perhipunan Indonesia, 129 fn, 145 fn, 295
- Persia, 21, 154, 193, 194, 229, 236, 372, 388
- Peru, 383
- Peston, Kuverji, 110 & fn
- Peshawar, 28
- Philippines, 27
- Physical Culture Academy, 162, 169, 173
- Pioneer, 96, 97, 100, 368 fn
- Poland, 26, 237
- Pole, Major Graham, 1 & fn, 345
- Ponsonby, Arthur, 87 & fn, 425
- Poona, 50, 68, 364 fn
- Port Said, 413
- Portugal, 237
- Postgate, R.W., 426
- Prasad, Mathura, 432 & fn
- , Dr. Rajendra, 4 & fn, 5, 269 fn
- Prayag, 188
- Press Workers Union, 331 fn
- Price, M. Phillips, 427
- Profits of Religion (Upton Sinclair), 425
- Proudhon, Pierre Joseph, 209 & fn
- 'Prosperous' British India (William Digby), 364 fn
- Public Safety Bill, 60 fn, 70, 202, 207, 269, 305, 318—324, 332 & fn
- Public Safety Ordinance, 336, 341, 349, 356
- Punjab landholders, 246, 247
- Punjab Provincial Conference, 144, 230, 421
- Purandare, V.B., 345 & fn

- Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (Robert Tressell), 426
- Rahim, Sir Abdur, 46 & fn
- Rahman, Habibur, 91
- Rai, Rajdhari, 417
- Rajagopalachari, C., 269 fn
- Rangoon, 431 fn
- Rao, B. Shiva, 345 & fn
- , D. L. Ananda, 199
- , Hosakoppa Krishna, 44 & fn
- , S.S., 420 & fn
- Ray, Sudhir, 334 & fn
- Reed, John, 426
- Republican Congress, 7 & fn, 8, 23, 24, 135
- Republican League, 7 fn, 35
- Ring of the Indian Bell* (Thakur-das Pahlwa), 428
- Rohtak, 421 fn, 422
- Rolland, Romain, 391
- Rome, 382
- Rowlatt Act, 190, 229, 232, 318, 319
- Roy, B.C., 269 fn
- , Kiran Shankar, 74 & fn
- , M.N., 250 & fn
- Rumania, 237
- Ruskin, John, 210 & fn
- Russia, 26, 163, 193, 202, 221, 230, 231, 237, 249, 250, 266, 310, 366, 370, 386, 388, 389, 403
- Russian Revolution to Brest Litovsk* (Trotsky), 426
- Ryan, 349 fn
- Sabarmati, 10, 20, 36, 269, 423
- Sadaqat Ashram, 432 fn
- Sahai, Sitla, 176, 422, 423
- Sahay, Krishna Ballav, 103 & fn
- Said-ur-Rahman, 56
- Saigal, Kedarnath, 75 & fn, 76, 350 fn
- Saklatvala, S., 3, 299, 332, 335, 336 354 fn
- Salvador, 142
- Sambamurti, B., 7 fn, 23 & fn, 74
- Sapru, Tej Bahadur, 43 fn, 88
- Sarhad*, 101 & fn
- Sarma, S. Mahalinga, 146 & fn
- Sastri, V. S. Srinivasa, 18 & fn
- Satyamurti, S., 74 & fn, 76, 275 & fn, 295 fn
- Satyapal, Dr., 338 & fn
- Savarkar, V.D., 394 & fn
- Saxena, Mohanlal, 102, 105, 110
- Schmidt, P.J., 152 & fn, 154
- Searchlight*, The, 51
- Secret Treaties* (F. Seymour Cocks), 426
- Sen Gupta, J.M., 174 & fn, 334
- Sen, Nishit, 334 & fn, 337, 338
- Sethi, Arjunlal, 68 & fn
- Shafi, Sir Muhammad, 46 & fn, 62 & fn
- Shahabad, 39 fn
- Shaikh, A.A., 283
- Shambhu Nath, 428 & fn
- Shankarlal, Lala, 75 & fn, 76
- Sharma, Pandit Dev Ratan, 45 & fn
- , R.S., 421 & fn
- Shastri, Kanhaiyalal, 404 & fn
- Sherwani, T.A.K., 93
- Shiva or The Future of India* (R.J. Minney), 394 fn
- Short History of British Colonial Policy* (Egerton), 426
- Short History of the English People* (John Richard Green), 58 & fn
- Shraddhanand, Swami, 319, 411
- Sikh League, 38, 45 fn, 76, 136, 143, 148
- Simla, 351
- Simon, Sir John, 1 fn, 89 & fn, 102, 104, 107
- Simon Commission, 9, 75 fn, 81—89, 92, 93, 122, 149, 154, 219, 227, 240, 262, 272, 273, 325, 369, 392 fn, 408
- , boycott committee, 105, 108—110, 112
- , boycott conference, 84—86
- , boycott of, 1 & fn—3, 8 fn, 35, 81, 93 fn, 98, 99, 101, 104, 105 & fn, 112, 113, 117 & fn, 118, 120, 125, 154, 206, 238, 303
- Sinclair, Upton, 425
- Sind, 9 fn, 37 fn, 38 & fn, 63 fn, 233, 431 fn
- Singapore, 37
- , naval base at, 27 & fn
- Singh, B.P., 421 & fn
- , Chaudhri Raghubir Narain, 30, 32 & fn, 347
- , Deoki Prasad, 347
- , Raghbir, 249, 250

- , Raja Jagannath Baksh, 392
& fn
- , Mangal, 45 & fn, 136
- Sinha, Anandi Prasad, 405, 406, 407
- , Sachchidananda, 48 fn
- , Sri Krishna, 420 & fn
- Sinn Fein, 306
- Sitaramaraju, Alluri, 167 & fn
- Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, 285 & fn
- Slaves of the Gods* (Katherine Mayo), 395 & fn, 396
- Smith, F.E., (see Birkenhead)
- Socialist Youth Congress, 213
- Soddy, Professor, 425
- South Africa, 13 fn, 22, 42
- Southern India Liberal Federation, 39, 76
- Spratt, Philip, 336 & fn, 339, 343, 354 fn
- Sri Lanka, 27 fn
- Sri Prakasa, 74
- Starr, Mark, 426
- State and Revolution* (Lenin), 426
- Statutory Commission (see Simon Commission)
- Strachey, John, 425
- Stuttgart, 69 fn
- Subedar, V., 68 & fn
- Sumatra, 274
- Sunderland, Rev. J.T., 311
- Sun Yat Sen, Madame, 146
- Surat, 431 & fn
- Swadesamitran*, 164
- Swadesh*, 417
- Swarajya*, 86 & fn
- Swarup (see Vijayalakshmi Pandit)
- Switzerland, 26, 395
- Syria, 4
- Tabriz, 194
- Tagore, Rabindranath, 188, 395
- Tambe, S.P., 391 & fn
- Tamerlane* (Harold Lamb), 425
- Tamkohi, 415, 417
- , Raja of, 415 & fn, 416
- Thengdi, D.R., 320 fn, 350 fn
- Theosophical High School, 427 fn
- Through the Russian Revolution* (A. Rhys Williams), 426
- Tilak, Lokamanya, 12 fn, 169 fn
- Times Book Club (London), 425
- Times of India*, The, 339
- Tokyo, 275, 384
- Towards Moral Bankruptcy* (M. Paul Bureau), 14
- Trades Disputes Bill, 60, 251, 260, 319, 323, 336, 341, 349, 356 & fn
- Trade Union Congress, 118, 121, 128 & fn, 129, 143
- Trafalgar Square (London), 342
- Tressell, Robert, 426
- Tribune*, The, 19, 249
- Trincomalee, 27 & fn
- Triumphant Machine* (R.M. Fox), 425
- Trotsky, Leon, 426
- Turkey, 4, 193, 195, 221, 232, 370, 382, 388
- Tyabji, S.A.S., 429 & fn
- Ugarte, Manuel, 139 & fn
- United States of America, 14, 22, 27, 126, 127, 129, 163, 237, 262, 275, 308, 311, 327, 364, 412, 427
- Vakil, Jahangir, 182 & fn
- Valley of Moon* (Jack London), 425
- Varanasi, 17, 19, 35, 75, 85—88, 403 & fn
- Venkatachari, K., 181 & fn
- Ventadour, 125
- Victoria, Queen, 20 fn
- Vidarthi, G.S., 68, 74, 126, 255 fn
- Vienna, 387
- Vijayaraghavachariar, C., 4 & fn, 62
- Vishal Bharat*, 150 & fn
- Visvanatham, T., 74 & fn
- Visvesvaraya, M., 364 & fn
- Vivekananda, Swami, 76 fn
- Wadia, P.A., 364 & fn
- Wang, T.C., 426
- Wardha, 176
- Wealth of India* (G. N. Joshi & P. A. Wadia), 364 fn
- Webb, S. & B., 426
- Wedgwood, Josiah, first Lord, 3 & fn
- Westminster, 95
- Wicksteed, A., 427
- Wilde, Oscar, 393

- Williams, A. Rhys., 426
 Winterton, Earl of, 59
 Woo, T.C., 426
Worker looks at History (Mark Starr), 426
 Workers and Peasants Party, 53 & fn, 144 fn, 250 fn, 297
Workers' Control in the Russian Mining Industry (John Strachey), 425
 Workers' Welfare League, 354 & fn
 World Commonwealth, 254
 World Youth Congress, 181
Young India, 14 & fn, 18 fn
 Youth Conference, at Madras, 172, 179 & fn
Youth Movement in China (T.C. Wang), 426
 Yugoslavia, 237
 Yule, Sir David, 265 & fn
 Yusuf, Nawab Sir Mohammad, 391 & fn, 392
 Zamindar, 173 fn